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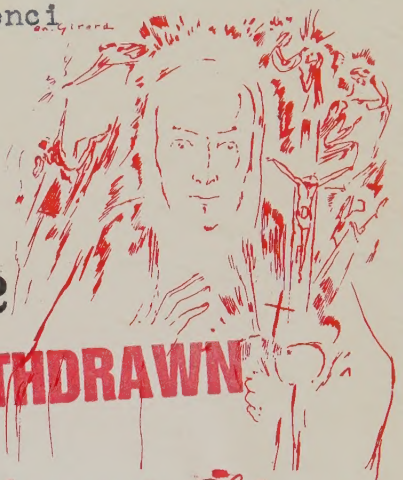

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BEATRICE CENCI

TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

(See Vol. II, p. 287)

Alleged Portrait of Beatrice Cenci
By Guido Reni
(Academy of San Luca, Rome)

BEATRICE CENCI

BY

CORRADO RICCI

Translated from the Italian

BY

MORRIS BISHOP

AND

HENRY LONGAN STUART

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME I

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The graceful picture of a young girl, her bust swathed in a white mantle and a white turban wound round her head, which has for years been pointed out to visitors at the Barberini Gallery as the portrait of Beatrice Cenci, first moved the distinguished author Guerrazzi to write his powerful and fantastic romance. To the selfsame portrait must be attributed the initial motive which impelled me, at all costs, to seek the real truth of her tragic story. During certain researches which I made upon the authenticity of the painting, it fell to my lot not only to read an immense number of books, articles and pamphlets bearing upon the case, but to pass from one surprise to another as I discovered how variously and with what misleading intention a story had been told, authentic material for which is abundant.

Passion and bad faith, in fact, began their work of deforming truth on the very day the fate of the Cenci was decided. Neither by those who championed her cause nor by those who made themselves the apologists of her judges does the slightest attempt at impartiality ever seem to have been made. Rulers, prelates, ambassadors, nobles and populace rush into the fray on one side or the other, each striving to surpass the other in violent partisanship.

Thus, a few hours before the headless body of Beatrice falls upon the scaffold, her apotheosis has begun. A disorderly funeral that resembles a popular demonstration is accorded her corpse. An equivocal report of the case and execution is diffused by hundreds of copies, full of false statements which take root and multiply with the evil fertility of error.

Amazed at the confusion and contradictoriness of the literature which has grown up around the Cenci case, I

asked myself whether it was not well worth the while of an historian to put aside all that had hitherto been written, and to rebuild the story from original and contemporary sources. Almost unawares I found myself engaged in an undertaking which has consumed five years of ceaseless activity. A lively curiosity—an honest desire to learn the truth, were my incentive and support.

At first I had hoped I should be spared the labour of examining, in the original, documents which had already appeared in print. But the shameful manner in which these had been published, the alteration of words and whole phrases, to say nothing of the fact that in many cases the publications were partial ones, in which the portions omitted were far from being the least important, soon convinced me that such a hope was vain.

One advantage I derived from accounts already in print, notably from those edited by Antonio Bertolotti. They indicated many documentary sources which I might otherwise have failed to trace. But the mere examination of these, the necessity, as often as not, of copying them afresh, was no light task. Nor, given the inaccuracy and defectiveness of the references, was the search for them an easy matter. I copied, for instance, almost in their entirety, seven records of the trial, and, thanks to the courtesy of the distinguished lawyer, Francesco Evaristo Gentili, the testament of Beatrice. Even this had never hitherto been published in full.

One document of priceless value—a record of the entire trial (not to be confused with the Summarium in the Vatican Archives), was first brought to my attention by Eugenio Casanova, Director of the Royal Archives of the Roman State, in one of two copies, made before 1849 by the lawyer, Agostino Stramazzi, of Belforte sul Chienti. The second copy was procured for me later by Sr. Arturo Vecchini.

Perhaps the thing that most impressed me was to find placed at my disposal the first of two volumes of transcripts of evidence made at the order of the Cenci themselves for the purposes of their defence. This reached

me through the extreme kindness and courtesy of Count Ascanio di Brazza Savorgnan, in whose family it is a treasured heirloom.

What a marvellous human document is this famous Trial! Even where the general facts are familiar, how essential, for its minute detail and for those accessories which make, one might say, the background of the tragedy! After all, the facts (to use terms of pictorial art) are but the drawing, simple enough in its design. The lights and shadows, the colour, the fervour of the composition, derive from a host of minute depositions. From these emerges, not only the psychology of the personages involved, but the psychology of the deplorable epoch in which they passed their lives.

I was enabled to carry out many fruitful researches in the secret archives of the Vatican, as well as among the records of the confraternities of San Giovanni Decollato, of the Crucifix and of the Stigmata. I must also record my thanks to the family of Cenci-Bolognetti, princes of Vicovaro, for the privilege of being permitted to examine a small but very precious collection of documents (nearly all unpublished). Among these I found an autograph letter of Beatrice, written in prison on August 22, 1599, or twenty days before her execution.

One other task remained for me. This was to examine for myself the localities in which the major episodes of my history had taken place. Here, as in the facts of the story, I found confusion reigning. Certain writers had sought to place the murder at La Petrella del Liri, while, as a matter of fact, Petrella del Salto, between Avezzano and Rieti, was the scene of the parricide. To Petrella del Salto I constantly betook myself, not only to explore the locality in the interests of my narrative, but, mentally and visually, to reconstruct each phase of the drama upon the very ground, the Rock where fate staged it. In similar manner, as successive features of my studies called my attention to other spots, in the Abruzzo, Emilia and Sabina, I made a point of visiting each in turn. I realised the importance of letting each episode in the story I was

weaving sink into my mind amid its own ambient. The more vivid they became for me, the more vivid, I was sure, would they be for any who should read me.

Let none of these readers blame me if I have been forced to relate a story that is gloomy, sinister, and at times unedifying by reason of the depravity of the figures it summons forth from the past and the times in which they lived. My desire has been to change nothing, to attenuate nothing, never to recede from my duty of setting down facts in all their harsh sincerity. My guiding principle has been the precept of mighty Dante:

"The truth no lie shall plunder of its due. . . ." [1]

Corrado Ricci.

Rome, *June*, 1923

[1] "La verità nulla menzogna frodi . . ."

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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

The ample and critical bibliography, dealing largely with the manuscript sources, has been omitted from this edition. Similarly the footnotes, providing documentary evidence for every quotation and practically every statement, have not been included unless they provide additional information or unless they refer to books which may be accessible to the scholarly reader.

The translators wish to express their gratitude to Mr. Giorgio de Grassi for valuable aid.

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BEATRICE CENCI

VOLUME ONE

CHAPTER I

A ROMAN FAMILY

Monsignor Cristoforo Cenci, Roman noble and cleric, Treasurer General of the Camera Apostolica, deputy collector of tithes of the entire state, canon of St. Peter's, director of the parish of San Tommaso de' Cenci, and in every charge, licit or illicit, which he had held, a persistent and shameless peculator of official funds, lay sick to death in a room of his dark palazzo of the Monte de' Cenci. About his bedside came and went Beatrice Arias, widowed a short time since; a boy, not yet thirteen, by name Francesco; Don Giulio Cenci and Don Marcello Tesauro, both clerics of the Camera; and Stefano Querro, commonly called Guerra, notary of the Rota.[1]

Cristoforo, having resigned, or, to be more exact, sold the office of Cleric of the Camera, had, with the permission of the Pope, espoused Beatrice Arias, mother of the boy at his bedside. The lad was his son, whom he had already legitimatised at the legitimisation bureau of the Campeggi. He had also obtained for him the rights of majority on January 15, 1561, and nominated him general heir of the family property—including so much dishonestly acquired —with right of succession thereafter to any future heirs.

Cristoforo could not personally fulfil the required legal formalities of the nuptials. His hands, twisted by gout, lay inert and bandaged upon the bed, no longer capable of signing the contract, nor of placing the ring upon Beatrice's finger. The notary, *eius expresso consensu et voluntate,* did that for him and signed the date: May 20, 1562.

[1] A tribunal of appeal on questions of the Canon Law.

Cristoforo still groaned for some time upon his bed of sickness. About the middle of the year he died.

Beatrice Arias some fifteen years before had abandoned her conjugal hearth and had come to live with him; she soon strengthened her position by presenting him with a son, heir to his possessions and name, for Cristoforo, vaunting the nobility and antiquity of his family, was deeply desirous that his stock, consisting solely of this fair scion, should not end. He was not satisfied with the boast that his line went back to Sergius, pope at the beginning of the tenth century; to Crescentius, the celebrated Roman patrician, foe of the Empire, imprisoned and slain by Otto III; to that Cencio who tore Gregory VII from the altar to shut him up in prison; he went further, much further back, to that "holy seed" of the ancient Romans among whom it was known families of "Cincie" had lived, as, among other proofs, an inscribed sepulchral pillar set up in the court of his palazzo testified. All these things and many others we pass over, not so much because they are uncertain, as because they lie upon the borders of that vast realm of speculation and flattery to which the old genealogists, those flatterers and forgers, held the keys.

It is certain that a family of Cenci, of which there were various branches, became prominent about the middle ages, and that, like many other families after the beginning of the XVI century, several of its scions became distinguished as scholars, lawyers, senators, military commanders, prelates, cardinals, etc. Nevertheless Cristoforo's fortune was entirely self-made, and he must be numbered among those who, in the words of Paolo Paruta, "purchased their castles and noble jurisdictions after accumulating riches by means of prelacies or other such services." [1]

It is by no means unlikely that a very unflattering legend once current upon the origin of the Cenci family, preserved among the Capitoline Manuscripts, in which a certain Cencio, the presumptive founder of the family, is

[1] Opere Politiche (Florence, 1852) II, p. 496.

taken to task for the ugly habit of laying his hands upon moneys entrusted to him by the state, was conceived and published as a satire upon Cristoforo. It is a legend full of romantic color and so vivid in its typically Roman setting that I can not resist the temptation at least to summarise it.

Once upon a time a "very base and humble fellow" went about Rome selling spindles and sweet sedge and buying up rags and old iron. He had five daughters, then "two fine sons," to whom he gave the names of Cencio and Ferro.[1] The first "was a student and became a notary"; the second "became an artist and was a pedlar." Ferro was killed during the war with the Sabines who had risen against Rome. Cencio was appointed collector, and therefore was always journeying abroad. At first he returned with the money collected; but one fine day, having amassed a great sum, took flight, so that the Council banished him *in perpetuo*. It was learned later that he had married and was living in Gaul, much honored "for that he was a citizen of Rome." There he stayed for twenty-three years, during which time he was assailed by nostalgia and begged many times to be repatriated. This was always denied him until, finding his desire for home irresistible, he inveigled himself into the train of "the daughter of the Gallic king," who was betaking herself to Rome to fulfil a vow. The good princess kept him hidden; when she came to Rome, invoking the name of the king her father, she pleaded for mercy. The Councillors refused, whereupon in dudgeon she turned her back on Rome.

The Council were much grieved at this and despatched ten worthy citizens after her, who promised that Cencio should return on the understanding that he submit to hearing himself sentenced to death "pro forma" upon the steps of the Capitol "to the sound of bells," and listen to a sentence recapitulating "all the torts and offences which he had committed against the republic." The king's daughter was still wroth, and the ten citizens finally com-

[1] Cencio = rags; ferro = iron.

promised. "Cencio was to be absolved in this manner. He should cause to be made, at his own cost, a horse of marble [1] and himself upon the horse" facing the tail, and "with a staff in his hand, and upon his breast an inscription in letters of gold as follows: *Bonæ Reipublicæ minus parte deprädavi indigno collettore deputato:* [2] and this was done that the memory of it might be perpetuated. And accordingly he had that horse made and set at the foot of his palace; and a few days after he brought his lady with all his family and he lived ever after nobly with much riches, and he made a loggia and many dwelling-houses in his property of Santo Tomasso de Monte Mola."

We may feel pretty sure that Cristoforo refused to accept as the founder of his race a wrongdoer in whom he must needs have recognised his own character better than in other figures he had picked out from the great history of Rome.

Beatrice Arias, on the contrary, was not the woman to set store upon such trivial matters. This she showed by the fact that, when left a widow a second time, she quickly rid herself of the "glorious" name of Cenci in favor of another which she received with the person of Evangelista Recchia da Barbarano, "one of the principal lawyers of Rome," but of base origin. Much as she had admired Cristoforo's adroitness in public office, she desired to imitate the great and powerful in one respect only—nepotism; this she seems to have practised skilfully enough through the influence of Cristoforo, procuring a captain's commission for her brother Baldassarre, marrying her sister Lucrezia to the Guerra already mentioned, making this Guerra the family notary and pushing him as far as the Rota.

Her third marriage, which took place soon after Cristoforo's death, served to confirm an old suspicion that

[1] Probably the allusion to the horse arises from the discovery of a marble horse, made upon the Cenci property in 1561, during Cristoforo's lifetime. Rodolfo Lanciani. Storia degli Scavi di Roma. Vol. II, p. 78.

[2] I stole all but a part of the state property when I was an unworthy deputy collector.

The Palace of the Cenci in Rome

Recchia, steward or solicitor of Cenci and therefore assiduous about the palace, had long enjoyed every extreme of intimacy with my lady, and was her accomplice not only in betraying the distant husband, but in deceiving Monsignore himself; it was even whispered that she had betrayed both with a certain Jew, Falcione.

Cristoforo in any case can have entertained no suspicion. He settled upon his mistress a house adjoining San Tommasso de' Cenci, and a large annuity, in full confidence, according to the formula, that she would live "in all decency and chastity." When she was finally left a widow from her first marriage, he decided to wed her, as we have seen.

Documents exist which paint the moral portrait, so to speak, of Beatrice Arias in lively colours. During her second brief widowhood the preceptor of the boy Francesco (Lorenzo Stefani of Mercatello d'Urbino) brought the accusation that, "impelled by some spirit past comprehension," she had caused to be broken open a box which he had in his room, and that she had taken from it some clerical robes. Giovanni Strozzi, Florentine, accountant in the Cenci household, was first examined. "The servants," he said, "state that it was My Lady," but he wished to note that "this messer Lorenzo complaining to me about this, I said to him that I had looked for him to let him know that it was desired to open his room, and I had not found him." One Tommaso Gagliardi testified, in his turn, that Madonna Beatrice had ordered him to call a locksmith. "I did not find him," he adds; it was only later that "I, being in the servants' hall, heard the door of messer Lorenzo's room being opened, but I cannot tell who opened it; except that then when I passed by that room, which is next to the servants' hall, I saw therein Signora Beatrice." He did not understand what she was doing; it was afterwards that he heard Stefani lamenting that "two clerics' robes had been taken from him."

What did the good pedagogue expect from the Court of Justice? He had neither the determination—nor the influence—of Beatrice. In the face of the timorous hesi-

tations of the witnesses, the accusation fell to the ground, and he was turned out of the Cenci palace.

The lady's manners, it seems, while in harmony with those of her third husband, were hardly gracious. There exists a guarantee (November 5th, 1566), by a certain Lorenzo de Marochi, cattle-dealer, who promises the Governor of Rome that Beatrice and Recchia shall no longer offend a certain Giovanni Luzono, under forfeit of a thousand scudi.

Beatrice died the 26th of June, 1575; six days earlier she had re-made her will of September 29th, 1573. It appears from this document that she was then dwelling in the quarter of Campo Marzio and that she had loved her country home at Frascati, for the benefit of which she made several bequests; she contributed also to the construction of the church of the Capuchins. She left many generous legacies to institutions and individuals, to her sister, to some nephews and to two baby daughters of her son Francesco: Antonina, legitimate, to whom she left "a casket of various things for girls' adornment, and a basin of silver and a flagon of gilt silver"; and Lavinia, a natural daughter, to whom she left "a thousand scudi for her dowry," with the request that the executors of the will "would have her placed in some convent for her education. And I desire that the thousand scudi be applied to the purchase of safe and profitable things." She named finally "as general heirs Francesco and his male sons, legitimate and natural, born and to be born of lawful wedlock."

CHAPTER II

A STORMY YOUTH

We now find Francesco, still a boy, in possession of a fortune not only vast for those days, but among the greatest in Rome. It appears from the inventory compiled at the time that his father left a capital of 422,580 scudi, equal to 2,012,900 of our lire, from which an annual income of 20,000 scudi was derived. Among the properties were Torrenova, Testa di Lepre, Falcognano, Capo di Bove, Casaletto called Arco Tiburtino, with vineyards outside the Porta Castello and the Porta San Paolo. Among the mansions owned by him were a group of buildings on the Monte de' Cenci, the palazzo alla Dogana near Sant' Eustachio, and a house in the via de' Cerchi; these possessions had been extended by other acquisitions at Remi, at Frascati, where he had bought in 1563 the hamlet of la Rufina, and also, beyond the limits of the Papal States, by the castles of Assergi, Pescomaggiore and Filetto, all in the Abruzzi, in the Kingdom of Naples. But to all this we shall return later.

The boy, who became master of this great inheritance at twelve and a half (he was born November 11th, 1549), had already displayed his violent disposition. In October, 1560, when he was not yet eleven, he had, with the support of his preceptor (who, we perceive, did not confine his instruction to Latin) attacked one Quintilio da Vetralla and had beaten him with a stick over the shoulders, one arm and the head, "with loss of blood"; for this offence suit was brought against him.

Not only was he precocious in violence, but in sensuality also; to such an extent that his guardian, Monsignor Francesco Santacroce, in accord with the mother, planned to lose no time in giving him a wife, in order, so said

the guardian, to secure him from solitary excesses and from dangerous contact with courtesans. The guardian's purpose however was no less to make a match for a niece of his own, Ersilia, of the same age as Francesco. To place the daughter of his own brother Valerio, then deceased, in so rich a household, seemed to him an excellent stroke, the more so since she had but 5,000 scudi to her own dowry. As guardian at one and the same time of the boy and girl, what better plan than to unite the pair?

The betrothal vows were exchanged October 4, 1563; the marriage took place November 2d. Decidedly, no time had been lost!

This union of two creatures still immature does not seem for some time to have resulted in offspring, and the first child, a son, Cristoforo, born in 1567, lived only three years. After the birth of this short-lived infant, however, successors followed with frequency and regularity. Nor was Francesco, for all his flock of legitimate offspring,[1] averse to fathering still others "by contraband."

But let us come to the first records of his deeds. It is a sorry and sordid tale, a long, vagrant litany of violence and turpitude, yet necessary to portray his charac-

[1] Francesco Cenci in the *Processo pro Sodomia* (c. 295, v) states that he had had twelve children by his wife. In 1594, seven were living: Giacomo, born September 23, 1568, at Rufina (Frascati); Cristoforo, 2d, born April 19, 1572, at S. Sabina; Antonina, born May 26, 1573, at Monte de' Cenci, where the following were also born: Rocco, 2d, born January 8, 1576; Beatrice, "born at the 23d hour on Wednesday, the 6th day of February, 1577"; Bernardo, born August 16, 1581; Paolo, born January 23, 1583. The five children who died young were: Cristoforo, 1st., born September 15, 1567, at Rufina, died January 6, 1571; Rocco, 1st., born at Aquila, November 3, 1569, died September 27, 1572; Valerio, born in the house of Madonna Faustina Stella, October 16, 1574, died September 7, 1576; Giordano, born February 16, 1580, at Monte de' Cenci, died October 24, 1581; Francesca, born April 16, 1584, at Monte de' Cenci, died five days later. The dates indicated are taken from the MSS "*Memorie dei Cenci*" in the Vittorio Emanuele Library at Rome. "*1567: Nota fatta per me, Francesco Cenci, etc.*" Slight discrepancies that have arisen in records of the Cenci family by De Vivere and Galletti are due to the fact that the dates of baptism instead of the dates of birth have been transcribed.

ter, vulgar, furious, lustful, fierce, hospitable to every evil, and to make clear the causes of his financial disasters and of his horrible death.

Late one evening in 1566 he stationed himself beyond the arch of the Cenci palace, near the building, on the side of the Tiber. He was accompanied by his cousin, Marcello Santacroce, a servant (Simone the German), and a certain Panfilo of Tuscany. He was awaiting his cousin Cesare, who was to pass that way on his return home. When Francesco and Marcello Santacroce saw him advancing alone, they went to meet him; pretending to be jostled, they set upon him, drew their swords and wounded him in one cheek. The cause of the affray is obscure, but Cesare Cenci must have known who were his assailants; the moment that he was cured, he took with him a Corsican servant and sought out Santacroce, whom he wounded in turn. Certain persons of authority intervened that worse might not befall; Cesare and his brother promised on November 28, 1566, to commit no offence upon Marcello Santacroce or Francesco for four years, under a forfeit of 2,000 scudi. None the less Francesco, called before the judge, stated on January 17th, 1567, that the encounter with Cesare had been quite accidental; that he had not even known that it was Cesare; and had only realised it during the fight from recognising his voice; that Santacroce had not been present; that he had only known of the wound given Cesare in the dark four or five days later from "Simone the German." [1] Francesco was not condemned to the Castel Sant' Angelo. Thanks to the interposition of his stepfather, Evangelista Recchia, he obtained, January 19th, the privilege from the Governor of occupying his mother's house as a prison, on condition that he should not leave it without permission and that he should present himself whenever summoned under forfeit of 10,000 gold scudi.

1 Francesco Cenci, speaking of the occurrence, said, "Some time last year—I do not remember the month." He added that he knew of the accusation against him a month before receiving the summons. It is probable that the assault took place in November, 1566.

Hereafter bad blood always existed between Cesare Cenci and himself; we shall see how, in all the actions of Francesco's sons against their father, Cesare invariably aligned himself with the former.

"For the business of Toscanella, 3,500 zecchini" is an entry by Francesco in a private account-book. The sum was certainly a settlement of some sort. The date and to what it refers are unknown.

In April 1567, the *Avvisi*[1] mention him, recounting that many peasants of Nemi had betaken themselves to Rome, "bearing complaint to the Pope" against their lord Francesco Cenci, because he had committed a cruel injustice.[2] The Court then sought for him, but he had "absented himself." It nevertheless brought an action against him and succeeded in laying hands upon him. "The signor Francesco Cenci has been brought a prisoner to Nemi and held there. . . . It is said that he caused a vassal of his to be hung on the gallows. The magistrate attempted to make a settlement for 10,000 scudi; he wished to pay but 8,000, and matters standing in this wise, news was had that he has done other evil things and that his vassal was wrongfully put to death, whereat they have held him in restraint, and so it is thought that he will pay more than 21,000."

He paid, as a matter of fact, 5,000 scudi; of which the pope distributed 4,000 "to his state grooms, 200 scudi to each."

Less than six months later he had committed other acts of violence at la Rufina (October 22). Lodovico, son of Lorenzo d'Assisi, "litter-muleteer" in his service, was so maltreated by him, kept on such short rations of food, and—what seems to have been thought more serious—of wine, that he asked Agostino, the steward, a Venetian, to pray permission of his lord for him to leave his service. The lord replied that the muleteer should look well to his work unless he wanted a broken head. The muleteer

[1] Official announcements.

[2] Cenci had bought the castle of Nemi from the Piccolomini.

was silent; but another day, persisting in his desire to leave, he asked for his pay. Francesco had him summoned to his room by a page named Guido. The muleteer went there; when he was within, Francesco shut the door and, taking up an "earthen basin" began to strike him with it. The servant defending his person, Francesco changed his weapon, pricked him with a dagger, then took a stick and beat him roundly, saying, "I promised you I would break your head, and as you see I am keeping my word." He then called Agostino and said to him: "Pay this cuckold." The man was paid and left the room covered with blood; while he was washing his wounds Francesco called him back, but the muleteer refused to obey. In spite of his pain and bleeding, "having put whites of eggs upon his wounds," he took the way to Rome, where he arrived in a pitiable state of exhaustion. Giambattista d'Alatri, another steward of Francesco Cenci, had him treated by a barber in the Campo dei Fiori, and dissuaded him from presenting a supplication to the Pope by assuring him that he would merely "make further trouble for himself." Not until October 22, 1568, when the matter was no longer fresh, did he present a formal complaint.

To proceed. Leopoldo Sebastiani states that in January 1570 Cenci underwent a first trial for sodomy and that he was freed through the intercession of the cardinals Farnese and Santacroce. It is not known whether he paid a fine. However, during the period he was a prisoner he reimbursed the sum of 300 scudi to the castellan.

In the same year, having again gone to Nemi, he became involved in bitter lawsuits with various countryfolk whom he had brutally beaten for insubordination. He fled to Aquila, whence he was taken, at the request of Pius V, to the Viceroy of Naples, brought to Rome and shut up in the Castel Sant' Angelo. Here he met a certain Lodovico, son of Francesco Taverna, deceased, of Milan, whom we shall encounter later, a bombardier in the Castello and subsequently a familiar of the Cenci establishment. He had been in prison several months when the

Auditor of the Camera, Riario, afterwards cardinal, declared that a composition would be possible by means of a fine.

Cenci then wrote a letter, dated March 25, 1571, from the Castello to Marcantonio Colonna, begging him to buy Nemi so that he might free himself from prison with the proceeds. He sold the property the following year to Muzio Frangipani, and was finally released.

In his own words: "I have been a prisoner on two other occasions during the rule of Pius V of happy memory," both times, he states, on account of the peasants of Nemi; he adds that once he was "in prison for about two months"; the other time for "about seven or eight months," and that "both affairs were settled; the first for 5,000 scudi, the second for 20,000 scudi."

In June, 1572, Francesco was again imprisoned "for unnatural vice" and liberated for (probably) 50,000 gold scudi, and since at the beginning of 1573 a balance of 5,000 gold scudi remained unpaid, Pope Gregory, in a letter written in the form of a brief, made a gift of it (February 1st) "to the estate of Cardinal Alfonso Caraffa, of which Cenci was a creditor."

Hardly a year has passed and we find him again in gaol (August 6, 1572). This time he is in the prisons of Tordinona, for having beaten a certain Pompeo, "his servant and house-steward," to the drawing of blood.

"In the house where I live (so went the story of Cenci to the judge) and where Messer Alessandro Olgiati lives too, though it is my house, there is in the cellar a partition of planks through which one can easily pass from one part to another when the door of the spiral staircase is not closed. And this Pompeo being my steward, I had ordered him to secure the doors every evening; and on Saturday night I desired to be assured the doors of my house were closed as I had ordered, all the more so since one can go up by this staircase through the whole house where the women are lodged; my watchfulness in this regard led me . . . to order my servant to see if those doors were made fast and he reported to me that he had found

that door of the staircase open; I then had this Pompeo summoned and I asked him for what cause he had left that door open; and he answered me that he had not been able to close it. Then I went down with him to that door, and there were Antonio and Galateo, who had closed it, and when I saw that the door had been shut and that it was not as he said, that it could not be shut, he began to stammer and mumble, until, seeing that he would not admit his own fault, I being angry struck him a few times, and finally gave him three or four blows with a stick, one of which caught him on the head and brought a little blood." That it was only "a little blood" does not seem likely. In any case the deponent admits that he had armed himself with the stick before descending the stairs, and was prepared to use forcible arguments during the discussion. He goes on to declare that he repented having castigated the poor wretch, the fact of course being that he foresaw that he would have to return to the prison from which he had so recently issued, and that there would be still more hard cash to pay. He even kept Pompeo in the house, intending to persuade him to lodge no complaint. "I brought him into my own room," he says, "and treated him with every kindness." He went so far as to allow the victim to sleep in his own room and to be treated there. The following day he had Pompeo confined in an upper room, and ordered that he should be again treated by the doctor Antonio, who "applied whites of eggs." Then, having locked the door, he ordered Rocco, another servant, to keep him under surveillance, "in order [he adds] that he might not be able to go forth and speak ill of me and say what I had given him." Finally, learning that a certain Bartolomeo Zoppino was a friend of Pompeo, he sought him out in order that the two might discuss the affair together. An agreement seems to have been reached that Pompeo should continue in Francesco's service, Francesco gave him the money for the household expenses; but the steward, taking out his pay for the month which was due him, seized his opportunity and fled.

From prison Cenci was remanded to his own home, which was to serve as his prison. On September 14th he was released by order of the Pope from this confinement on condition that he should absent himself from Rome for six months or forfeit ten thousand scudi. He left; but when about four and a half months had passed (February 3, 1573, to be exact) the Governor of Rome permitted him to re-enter the city; the guarantee of Cardinal Caraffa had obtained this favour for him.

The spiral staircase of which Francesco speaks was demolished only a few years ago; some traces of it still remain. It was in the southern angle of the palazzo, or, to be exact, in that section of it which advances farthest toward the Tiber. We define it thus because at that time the buildings of the Cenci did not constitute one large whole, but consisted of five or six structures of varying heights and styles of architecture, some adjoining, some connected by arches. The greater part had been erected by the elder Rocco, uncle of Francesco, after Julius II had granted him the "monte" between the Piazza Giudea and the Tiber. Beside the tenants, three different branches of the Cenci inhabited this "monte": the branch of Francesco, that of Baldassarre, and that of the children of Lodovico. One of the arches is the famous Arco de' Cenci, which still exists; above this, as we shall see, was a large hall which can still be identified, although it is now divided by partitions into three rooms and a small corridor. Through this one reaches the so-called Palazzina, in which there still remain the beautiful fifteenth century court in the style of Ammannati, and, in the upper rooms, modernised in great part, some friezes whose subject is the story of Moses, painted perhaps by Sermoneta.

Between the buildings to the west of the piazzetta di San Tommaso, a tower at the same time separated and joined two other structures; its base was supported upon another open arch, through which one could pass from the piazzetta just mentioned to that of the Cenci without making a detour by the lane of the Monte. From the tower (which is still visible) another building jutted forth,

Courtyard of the Cenci Palace

extending eastward; at one of its angles there are traces of a later enlargement. A considerable extension then carried the group of the Cenci buildings toward the church of Santa Maria del Pianto, and in this there was a small court closed on three sides. About these three sides ran, on the upper and lower storeys, two open galleries, the upper one decorated with views of the city. Although altered, the galleries and the court are still to be seen, but no trace of the views remains. The reader should bear in mind this little court and these galleries, for here an important episode of our story will be staged. We shall not further describe this edifice of Cyclopean masonry. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the long side overlooking the recent piazza del Progresso was constructed and when the buildings were equalised, the taller ones being brought low and the lower ones elevated, it assumed a certain unity of appearance. But in the interior no such unity was attained. To-day one wanders blindly among the various wings and wretched rooms and halls from floor to floor, where some few sixteenth-century paintings of the story of Joseph, of the creation of Adam and Eve, of the slaying of Abel, etc., still survive. Among these modernisations it is almost a vain effort to evoke the tragic shades of the Cenci. We shall only note that the spiral staircase did not end at the street level, but descended into the cellars dug between the apertures of the covered portico and the theatre of Cornelius Balbus, the ruins of which are precisely what forms the vast cumulus called the Monte de' Cenci. From these cellars one might go up by various stairs or inclines to other parts of the Cenci buildings. It was this mode of access that Francesco sought to prevent by means of wooden barriers and by the vigilant securing of the doors.

The year 1575 was a Jubilee year. All the churches of Rome were restored, renovated, adorned. And so Francesco Cenci, too, repaired the church of San Tommaso.

It was a little old mediæval church called San Tommaso of the Mill-Stones because of the near-by mills of

the Tiber, also San Tommaso della Fraternità, because it was the official residence of the *Caput romanæ fraternitatis*. In 1554 it was granted by Julius III to the patronage of Rocco Cenci senior; shortly after it was reconstructed by Cristoforo. In 1565 Sermoneta decorated with frescoes of some nobility the chapel of the Nativity of Jesus; the scene is pictured upon the altar. To the right is the Annunciation; to the left, the Nativity of Mary. Saint Anne half rising upon a sumptuous bed, and the women, preparing to wash the new-born babe, have faces and costumes of such a character as to lead one to believe that they are portraits. Are Beatrice Arias and her sister Lucrezia among them? It is a conjecture merely; but where history is silent, fancy may run free. There was a certain Cristoforo, later buried in the chapel of the Crucifix (the chapel to the right), who converted into an altar a superb Roman table and its trapezophoron with the heads and clawed feet of winged lions. Beneath the table has now been set the graceful baptismal font. It is supported on a triangular base with dolphins' heads terminating in leaves; in front of the bowl is the crest of the Cenci, a bend wavy between six crescent moons. Many of the children of Francesco, destined to such tragic ends, Beatrice among them, on February 12, 1577, received baptism in this basin, now dry and empty!

On the floor of the second chapel to the left, dedicated to Saint Francis, is set a mortuary stone with Francesco's coat-of-arms. It is the spot in which he wished to be buried. Here were buried, instead, the quartered remains of his detested son, Giacomo.

We return to the all too familiar record of cruelties. On June 6, 1577, Maria, Milanese, daughter of Filippo, a perfumer, brought a complaint against Francesco Cenci, her master. The document has been gnawed by mice, but from what remains the facts may be reconstructed. Francesco, it appears, sent to ask her for a key; she could not give it to him because "his boys" had taken it. He then fell into a fit of anger, took a broom-handle and beat her

Altar and Baptismal Font in Church of San Tommaso de' Cenci

with it. In the evening he ordered her to go "and see what Domenico, his clerk, was doing." She indeed went to him, but returned without having told the clerk that the signore had asked for him, and Domenico, after dining, left the house. When Cenci learned this, his anger again rose against Maria, and, in the presence of Beatrice's nurse and the chambermaid, Caterina, he again seized the broom-handle. "He gave me," said she, "very many blows, knocking me down, and also kicking me. He left me for dead on the ground and he made blood come out of my mouth." The notary verified the bruises and the contusions. She continues: "For three days I was in so much pain that I could not eat or drink or speak." Francesco called in no doctor nor surgeon to visit her; even at the time she was speaking to the judge she was covered with bruises and racked with pain. For all this she claimed justice. We do not know how the case was settled. Perhaps the poor creature was placated with a few scudi.

A year has passed. Lodovico, son of Francesco Taverna of Milan, who had been a bombardier in the Castel Sant' Angelo in 1570, and whom Francesco Cenci had known while he was in prison owing to his disputes with the peasants of Nemi, states that he had seen in the Cenci establishment, which he frequented in the capacity of blacksmith, a certain Giorgio Pereto of Savoy, a stable-boy, who occasionally drove the coach; at what precise time he is unable to recall, but remembers that it was at the time the cane was being gathered (which would make it January), for he had arranged with Francesco to bring to the Porta Maggiore the cane then cut at Torrenova (called also Rocca Cenci), five miles from Rome on the via Labicana. This was a large property bought by Cristoforo in 1562 to add to contiguous lands already his, to which Francesco two years later was to add La Selvotta. Here, not far from the hamlet, half choked by vegetation, the remains of a small sixteenth-century nympheum (of which we shall speak again) may still be seen, which the peasants call "the lovely Cenci's bath."

While Lodovico Taverna, followed by Cenci and Giorgio, both on horseback, was leading some poneys laden with cane, one of them balked, and for no drubbing could it be persuaded to move. Francesco Cenci first bade Giorgio dismount from his own horse and mount and master the obstinate brute. The stubborn animal unseated and threw the stable-boy. Francesco then dismounted from his own horse and told Giorgio to mount it, while he himself curbed the unruly beast. Giorgio refused. Francesco was seized by a new access of rage; raising the stick he was carrying, he brought down two violent blows on the back of the unfortunate boy and remounted his own steed.

This was all that Lodovico dared tell; fear prevented him from adding that Francesco joined kicks and pummellings to the beating and cursed Giorgio foully, threatening him with death.

CHAPTER III

CENCI MAKES HIS WILL

Ersilia Santacroce died in child-bed. On April 16, 1584, she gave birth to a daughter, who lived barely five days;[1] the mother was seized with deadly sickness and died on the eighteenth.

In her Francesco lost a wife with whom, save for a few incidents, life had run smoothly. Facts indeed only too plainly indicate that the wife, knowing him from infancy, had made no opposition to his tendencies and had suffered him to commit every sort of violence and infidelity.

The following year (to be exact, April 24, 1585) was marked by an event calculated to bridle such a character as Francesco Cenci. This was the election of Sixtus V, who straightway proved himself an inexorable instrument of justice, sparing no man, however high, however well protected by his position.

Francesco judged the time opportune to make his will and enter into family litigation. The testament was drawn up on November 22, 1586; it was of a nature calculated to please His Holiness.

"Fearing that I may die at any hour, and death being the one thing certain," he deposes that he be buried in the chapel of St. Francis in San Tommaso de' Cenci at one o'clock in the morning, in the presence of twelve assistants, priests, friars and his own orphans, with seven torches, and nothing more. He made many bequests to the hospitals and for dowries for marriageable girls. He specified for Antonina and Beatrice, who were being educated in the Monastery of Monte Citorio, 18,000 scudi apiece and the rent of two shops of the palazzo at La Dogana, which returned 120 scudi yearly.

[1] The daughter was given the name Francesca.

To Lavinia, his illegitimate daughter, then sixteen, who was likewise in a convent, he left the proceeds of a rental of 50 scudi a year, and, if she should wish to marry, 5,000 scudi (in this was included the 1,000 scudi left to her by Beatrice Arias, mother of the testator), but only the 1,000 scudi in case she should become a nun. If she should die married but without offspring, the dowry was to return to the Cenci. He named, finally, as his general heirs Cristoforo, Rocco, Bernardo and Paolo and such others as might be born if the testator should remarry.

To Giacomo, his eldest son, he left only the minimum required by law.

The invocations "to Our Lord God and to His Glorious Mother and to Saint Francis and to all the other Saints of the Celestial Court" and a few charitable legacies have sufficed to move some writers to proclaim a victory of Heaven over the soul of Cenci, and to suggest that "he was not therefore such an evil father nor atheist nor misanthrope as people would constantly have us believe, but quite evidently an excellent head of a family." [1]

The will is certainly full of good intentions; but we shall see how consistently perfidious was the character of the man who made it.

During the reign of Sixtus V, while careful not to vent his violence outside the domestic circle, he found an outlet for his spleen in civil processes.

In November, 1587, he was in litigation with his stepfather, the advocate Evangelista Recchia di Barbarano, who from time to time had supervised his vast properties. Francesco had everything, even his stepfather's books, sequestrated. There were about four hundred volumes, nearly all on legal subjects; none were of literary character except possibly Guicciardini's histories. The inventory, drawn up in the presence of an agent of Cenci and Jo. Jacobo, agent of Evangelista, does not include the work of a single poet or writer of romance.

The suit became complicated by others, all of them with

[1] Bertolotti, p. 25.

the stepfather. In his examination of March 13, 1594, Cenci states that in point of fact he has had two or three civil suits with Recchia, whom he accuses of having gone about slandering him and threatening that he would like to see him dead; a credible wish in view of Recchia's distressful situation. "Evangelista was my mother's husband and thus my stepfather, and he managed my property for a long time, and when I wanted to review his accounts to make him pay me what he still owed me, his hatred was aroused against me."

The will shows that, in the latter part of 1586, Francesco was already at loggerheads with his son, Giacomo, and a sentence published May 23, 1597, indicates that he was on ill terms with his other sons, whom he finally drove from his house. According to Cesare Cenci, these were Cristoforo and Rocco, besides Giacomo. Cesare declared that he was only trying to make peace. "He would not receive them in the house," nor even "send them to school, much as they wished to study . . . he never was willing to do anything for them."

There was in the Cenci household one Maria, daughter of Paolo Pelli of Spoleto, who had come to Rome in 1587. Young, tall, with a hairy mole on her face, she was a person of utter physical and moral vulgarity. She used foul language, with a sort of private jargon between herself and her master; she was the instrument of his most shameful desires, as appears from the trial for sodomy of 1594. But in 1587 this was not yet known.

Not only did Francesco have intimate and reprehensible relations with this woman, but he did not scruple to keep her by night in his own bed and by day entrust his own sons to her care. She seems to have been a general factotum in the household, acting in turns as servant, cook, governess and paramour.

On Christmas Eve, 1589, she was struck on the head with a stick by her master, "because," she confessed, "I said to him that since he was having to do with me, I did not care for his having to do with another woman

whom he brought into the house for this purpose; and who was full of the French evil." Maria was treated by Maestro Tommaso Pini of Imola, barber in the piazza Giudea, who was called in by Francesco. He made a report to the Governor, but stated on the word of Maria (or professed to have it) that she had fallen down the kitchen stairs while carrying wood. There was some gossip about this affair, especially on the part of neighbours, who, not seeing the girl leave the house for several days, reached the conclusion that she was dead! The barber was put in prison, but soon set free.

Francesco had for a long time had an inkling that Sixtus V did not intend him to enjoy in peace all the money high-handedly acquired by his father Cristoforo. Nor was Sixtus appeased in 1562, when, to avoid the contesting of his inheritance, 33,000 scudi was restored to various departments once directed by the deceased Treasurer.

On February 25, 1590, Sixtus commanded Bartolomeo Cesi, treasurer general of the Camera Apostolica, that suit and action should be brought before him against Francesco for the goods wrongfully acquired by Cristoforo his father, and that the treasurer general should proceed without ado to attach them. These goods, said Sixtus V, "the fruit of illicit negotiations carried on contrary to the constitution of Pius IV," should return to the Camera. Hence it was necessary to take possession of them all, "as well in dues and interests and their profits" as in real estate, and this latter "shall be sold for prices which to you seem proper; and the moneys from these sales paid into the hands of our general Depositary."

Francesco quickly understood that resistance was vain, but he understood also that if he should offer a considerable sum, the Pontiff would be placated. In fact, early in April, Francesco having petitioned to be admitted to an audience, the Pope wrote again to Monsignor Cesi: that "since we wish to act toward him with benignance,

morse alli 7 di 7bre 1576

Rocco Cencio mio figliolo, Nacque alli 8 di Gen.ro 1576 de giorno di Dom.ca ha hore 23 et e, nato nella Casa cato la Chiesa di S.to Thomaso

morse alli di 1595 di mala morte

Beatrice Cencia mia fig.la Nacque alli 6 di febraro 1577 de giorno de Mercoredi ha hore 23. et e, nata nella sog.ta casa,

Lauinia Cencia mia fig.la Naturale Nacque alli 5 di Agosto 1570 de giorno de venerdi ha hore 22, et e, nata al Aquila,

Note in Handwriting of Francesco Cenci Registering the Birth of Beatrice Cenci

we order you that, when the said Francesco shall have paid into the hands of our general Depositary or to whom you shall designate 25,000 scudi in the manner and on the terms that you shall agree upon, free and clear, however, of every tithe and twentieth part of the Commissario, you shall revoke every attachment, stay and impediment and accord him every right and action . . . and make to him an instrument of cession, liberation and general quittance in such sort that neither that Francesco nor his heirs may ever again in the future be on this account molested."

The sum paid by Francesco for no other purpose than to be never again molested, was certainly conspicuously large; it will seem the more serious if one considers that already, in 1562, he had for the same reason paid 33,000 scudi. But it was far from the sum left by Cristoforo which Sixtus V had threatened to appropriate. It was to his interest to be resigned and say nothing.

This payment was followed on April 18th by a Papal decree. The long list of accusations, in which allusion is made, not only to Cristoforo's administrative abuses, but to his guilty relations with Beatrice Arias, and in which doubt is cast upon the validity of their marriage and upon the legitimacy of Francesco, ends with a general decree of regularisation, absolution and benediction!

The 25,000 scudi were assigned by the decree of Sixtus on May 19, 1590, to the construction, already begun, of the Ponte Felice over the Tiber near Borghetto, on the via Flaminia a few kilometres above Civitacastellana.

A little more than three months later Sixtus V died. And Francesco Cenci, feeling himself freed from an intolerable oppression, celebrated the event by a felony!

"The pears are almost gone and the chestnuts are coming in," said Sixtus V (Peretti),[1] prophesying his successor G. B. Castagna, who took the name of Urban VIII. Sixtus V died August 27, 1590; Castagna was

[1] Ital. pera = pear; castagna = chestnut.

elected September 15th, but lived only twelve days. Nor was Gregory XIV's pontificate a long one. He died October 15th, 1591, leaving the Papal chair to Innocent IX, who ascended it fourteen days later.

It was during the brief period when the seat was vacant that the following occurrence took place.

Attilio di Nunzio Angelini of Poggio Vitellini, between Amatrice and Accumoli, a grain-carrier, and his cousin Baldassarre, Milanese, chanced to encounter Francesco Cenci, who was going to Termini in his coach with Francesco Scotusio of Norcia, his steward and in odd moments tutor to the "children." Francesco halted his coach, which was followed by two servants armed with short arquebuses. He summoned Baldassarre and told him that he wanted the money collected from the bakers. Baldassarre replied that it was entrusted to him as bearer. Francesco, who was seated by the coach-window, struck the man a blow; then, jumping out, he ordered his servants to shoot. One of them quickly lowered his arquebus, but Francesco stopped him and told him quietly not to shoot; picking up a stone, he hurled it at Baldassarre, who dodged it and fled, together with Angelini.

There is no occasion to believe that Francesco restrained his servant through any worthy sentiment. He was well aware that it was dangerous to commit such an act where he was and in broad day. In fact, continues Angelini: "The following day Baldassarre's wife came to my house and told me that Baldassarre was sick to death," that "the evening before two arquebus shots had been fired above the door of his house in the piazza Margana, though they did not hit him, that he had been beaten on the head with the butt of an arquebus and wounded sorely." Angelini went to see his cousin two or three days later; "I found him in bed and . . . he told me that the Signor Francesco Cenci had had him beaten, and that he had seen him with his steward in the piazza Margana."

Francesco declared to the judge that Baldassarre had cheated him. "The clerks of the Camera [he deposed] in

that year of dearth would make out the requisitions and write orders to me, Francesco Cencio: You will deliver so many measures of grain to such a one. And I would deliver it to the carriers who were to deliver it to the bakers according to the order; and now I was sending the grain by this Baldassarre, for him to bring it to the bakers as I had been ordered. But Baldassarre, on the contrary, designed to carry it to another and take the money for himself." He was, then, he pleaded, justified in having given the order "Shoot him!" to his men; "but since Baldassarre got behind one of those who were there, I was afraid that the guard, who had got ready to shoot, would injure the man who stood in front of him, and I said, 'Stop, stop!'" He had continued on his rounds (the story went on) planning a greater punishment and still more determined to have the man soundly beaten. That evening about the time of the Ave Maria, he went with his steward, three vassals armed with wheel-arquebuses, and the guard, to Baldassarre's lodging and ordered one of them, he said, to go and give him "four good blows with a stick." Baldassarre was heard to shriek and the guard returned saying that he had beaten him as he deserved. Francesco added that he discharged the three vassals and the guard on November 6, 1591, or a week after Innocent IX was made Pope, and that only during the period of the papal seat being vacant had he gone about with armed servants or himself armed with an arquebus, even in his coach. This Francesco Scotusio also testified. Cenci exculpated himself repeatedly, insisting that on that evening "he did not order the arquebus shots, only the beating."

It should be noted, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the period, that in those days at the death of a Pope and during the conclave the Roman populace abandoned itself to the gravest excesses; there was no security for individuals, nor property, nor for houses, even those of religion; men were wounded and killed; burglary and arson were rife; the gates of the city were opened to the bandits, the prisons let out their savage rabble.[1]

1 Dom. Gnoli, *Vittoria Accoramboni* (Florence, 1870), pp. 221-223.

At the death of Paul IV (August 18, 1559), partly because of the long conclave, the excesses were, for a good twelve days, almost incredible. "The populace swarmed like madmen to the Capitol, and they carried off from its post in that honoured spot a most beautiful marble statue of the dead Pope, which had been erected to him when he drove out the corrupt officers and freed the city from certain new tolls and taxes which had been imposed upon it. One cannot describe what was then done with this statue, nor with what indignities it was broken in pieces, dragged about the whole city, with a yellow Jew's-cap upon its head, and after all manner of abuse cast into the Tiber." Another tumult broke out at the death of Sixtus V (August 27, 1590). Later, at the death of Clement VIII, the vassals of the Duca d'Altemps even cut the aqueducts. The Governor, rather than disarm the mob, permitted the nobles and their hired satellites to go armed to the teeth, on pretext of defence—which invariably turned into offence.

Maria of Spoleto now reappears, once more bloodily beaten by Cenci. On September 30, 1591, she denounced her master for two misdeeds: the first committed during the previous Lent, the second on the very day of her complaint. Referring to the first offence, she stated: "He struck me on the right eyebrow with an iron spoon, and he crippled my hand with a stick." And this because she said to Agatha of Bologna, the cook, who was there at the time but left later, "that the master had burned up some belts of mine." The servants in the house at that time were no longer there, she said, addressing the judge on September 30, 1591, "but the neighbours are there and know all." She referred to those who were in the little houses in the piazzetta di San Tommaso, opposite one wing of the palace. Lavinia del Tuscolo or di Frascati, sister, it seems, of Don Vincenzo, rector of the church, and widow of Vincenzo of Lucca, saw the beating and saw how her eyebrow was injured. Maria fled from the palace, and Francesco followed her even into the house of

Don Vincenzo, where he began again to club her. All this was seen also by Paola, wife of Cesare Floccari, Roman, a button-seller. These were two Jews recently converted to Christianity. Lavinia deposed before the judge that she and her daughter Marzia had been in the house near the hour of Ave Maria, about to dine, when Maria came rushing in calling for help. They sought to calm her and had her sit down, to put dressings on the wound on the eyebrow, but suddenly Cenci also came running in with a stick and began to beat her again without pity; and when Lavinia and her daughter tried to intervene, he gave each of them a blow with the stick and continued to strike "without paying attention to any one" in the midst of the women's screams and his own shouts. Servants ran in, and Francesco compelled Maria, beaten as she was, to return to the palace. To avoid any legal accusation he did not call the barber to treat her, but stripped her and put on her wounds and bruises "a kind of oil of roses," while Lavinia ran to Signora Porzia Cenci (who had already been in 1585 the governess of Beatrice and Antonina) to have her hand treated, and Marzia anointed the bruise caused by a blow on the leg. But Maria of Spoleto returned with Francesco, who said, "This is a case for some good hard *quattrini*."

The second occurrence, on account of which she had made up her mind to make the complaint of September 30, had taken place in the early afternoon of that same day. Before going to Termini to measure the grain which he was giving to the Camera, Francesco bade his son Bernardo summon a tenant of his, Caterina, widow of Meneco Mantarii, living in the house next to San Tommaso; he asked her to assist Maria in nursing his son Paolo, then eight and a half years old, who was ill. She came and entered the room where the boy was lying. Meanwhile Francesco sat down to dine before setting off on his journey to Termini. After a time he rose, went to call the woman, who was washing the boy, made her come into the dining hall and said to her, "Your health, Madonna Caterina"; she replied, "Good health to you, sir." He

invited her to come close, "for he wished to tell me something or other about Jesus of Nazareth, but I couldn't tell what it was that he said, except that He was born of kings and other things which I didn't understand." Then he turned to Maria and told her to take a chicken and other meat and prepare it for herself, Caterina, and Bernardo, hardly ten years old, whom he obliged to be present at his displays of violence and to hear his "dirty talk about women." Maria, instead of obeying, persisted in talking on without moving, whereat he told her again to hurry. And Maria had a nimble tongue! Then he took off a shoe and threw it at her, striking her in the back. At the blow Maria lost her temper and addressed him with bad words "which I did not catch," said Caterina, "because they talk together in a way that I do not understand." Francesco, however, understood perfectly; he rose in fury, took a broom-handle, and in the presence of Caterina and a cook named Lucia began to beat the woman without mercy, breaking the stick upon her back. He then took another and returned to the onslaught; when she started to flee he followed at her heels dealing her ferocious blows as far as the door of the palace. "You could know that the blows were good ones," Caterina testified, "because they sounded so loud." At last, abandoning his victim, he told Caterina to attend to the boy and went off about his grain.

But this time Maria, who had fled from the palace weeping and screaming (as was declared by that Paolo we have just mentioned, who saw the girl turning down through the alley of the Monte de' Cenci), ran to the judge and made her complaint, accusing Francesco also of the previous beatings. The notary heard her testimony and examined the marks of the blows: one on the left ear, two on the left arm, three in the back, with bruisings and swellings. There were others, she said, a little lower down, but the notary refused to verify this statement. "My master aforesaid has three chests of mine and a bed, with many other odds and ends and 43 scudi in cash, which I pray he may be required to restore to me, and may justice take

its course about these matters that I have told to you, because I do not wish to stay any longer with him."

And yet Maria returned once more to Cenci.

Certainly his motive in compounding everything with money must have been that she should keep close upon matters which could bring him quickly and surely to the stake. It was thanks to the money she received from him and to his good offices [1] that she found, in the summer of 1592, a complaisant husband. This was a porter named Lorenzo; he was ready to restore, if not her belaboured body, at least her social position. We shall see later what sort of a man Lorenzo was.

In order to avoid daily contact with his sons and his relatives, with whom he was in a maze of law suits, Francesco decided to leave the Monte de' Cenci. He went to Ripetta, to "the palace where the Inquisition had been." Paul IV had assigned the building to that tribunal, and had spent 12,000 scudi in renovations and in the construction of a prison. But at his death a furious mob attacked it and broke in, maltreating the officers who were there, destroying many records of trials, devastating and setting fire to the edifice. Following this the Inquisition was transferred elsewhere, and the damaged palazzo was ceded to Giovanni Paulo Galante, who restored it and in 1593 rented it in part to Francesco Cenci. This latter, however, lived there but a short while. In September of the same year he moved to his palazzo at La Dogana, of which we shall speak later.

Returning to Holy Thursday of 1593, we note that even this transfer of domicile became the subject of lawsuits, violent acts and evil caprices.

Under the date of April 10th, 1593, we have the complaint of one Stefano Belloni, Savoyard, who for more than a half year had held the office of pay-clerk in the

1 In his examination, March 13th, 1594, Francesco Cenci said, "It is about a year and a half since she left my house; I arranged her marriage, and she was not out of favour with me when she left." *Proc. di sod.*

household of Francesco Cenci. During the moving, Francesco ordered Belloni to lead a stubborn and vicious mule from the Monte de' Cenci to Ripetta. Belloni sought to hide his fear of the animal's heels by saying that it was not his business to lead mules.

He speedily regretted the words! Francesco sprang at him and began to pummel him in the face without pity. The first blow caught him in one eye, others ravaged "all his mustachios." The aggressor then took him by the throat and told his own son Bernardo, then a little more than eleven years old (an edifying lesson), to give him "the little pitchfork," as he wanted to kill the man. And since Belloni, wishing to leave such a service, asked for his wages, Francesco had the door locked, again by Bernardo.

Terrified by this sudden assault, Belloni agreed to lead the mule, but Francesco retained his doublet as security and commanded him, if asked the reason for the contusions on his face, to reply that he had fallen. The clerk then set out; a few steps from the Monte de' Cenci, in the piazza Branca (in large part destroyed in 1888 when the *via Arenula* was opened), the mule "began to kick and act like mad"; it pulled away from him, freed itself from the bridle, and returned to the palace followed by the unfortunate Belloni.

Fearing his savage master's fury, the man would not enter, and asked Maria of Spoleto for his doublet, that he might go away. But she dragged him in by main strength and shut him in the house. Francesco appeared, led him upstairs "to the attick where he slept" and asked him several times if he really wished to leave. Maria also suggested to him that he had better keep still if he did not want to incur another beating.

Francesco and Maria then searched his hose to see if he had any money, stripped him down to his shirt, so that he might not escape, and left him in the bedroom. That same night—"it must have been about half past one," said Belloni, "the Signor Francesco made me get in a carriage with him and with the maidservants and his chil-

dren, without cloak or doublet, so naked that I was very cold, and he took me to that other house called Ripetta, where he likewise kept me shut up two days in the kitchen, and he made me eat with the maids and the children, and he did not allow the other servants to see me before I was healed; and after those two days I began to go out into the courtyard, but I could never again have my doublet to go out of the house, and he made me do without it always, until Holy Saturday, when he had it given me to go to confession, but I got it with great difficulty, for Signor Francesco would not return it to me except when I should be fully cured, nay even when he gave it back to me he looked at my eye to see how I fared. And when I went to confess myself this Signor Francesco told me that I should come straightway back, and that as soon as I returned he would give me a hat, and so I went to confess myself and returned that evening late to the house where I remained those three days of Easter without coming to lodge a complaint about it because I thought that at such a time it would not be right."

The following Wednesday after Easter he asked for the pay due him, but Cenci denied it to him, affirming that he had no petty cash. The other nevertheless departed and brought an accusation against his master, appending the names of those who could give their testimony. He concluded: "I have given a memorial to my Lord the Governor upon this matter pleading for justice." But was justice rendered? As nothing further resulted, we must conclude that once more Francesco settled the dispute by paying out money.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIAL FOR "UNNATURAL VICE"

On the 21st of July, 1593, Francesco gave Lavinia, his natural daughter, whom he had legitimatised, in marriage to Emilio Morea of Rome. The groom was forty years old, a doctor in both laws,[1] had "held administrative posts and issued judicial decisions" and had pleaded cases committed to him by the Governor of the Rota; he had also stood trial for "unnatural vice," a matter of small moment to Cenci.

Lavinia was born at Aquila in 1570.[2] Although by that time Francesco had been married to Ersilia Santacroce for seven years, Beatrice Arias, Lavinia's grandmother, took a great fancy to the child, kept her close to her side, and, in the additions made to her will, June 20, 1575, bequeathed her the sum of 1,000 scudi. When Beatrice Arias died in 1575, the girl was put in the hands of the

[1] Morea was the son of Lavinia Rastelli, widowed in 1593 of her second husband, Jacopo de Margani. Some have placed the wedding of Lavinia Cenci with Morea on April 21, 1593, some on July 10, 1594, some on January 28, 1596. The statement of the notary Stella of July 21, 1593, settles the matter: "Hae sunt fidantiae et pacta sponsalitia in Dei nomine habita facta et firmata inter Ill.m Franciscum Cincium Pat. Rom. uti patrem Ill.s d. Laviniae Cinciae eius filiae naturalis et legitimatae ex una et Ill.m d. Emilium de Morea etiam Rom. et J. U. D. partibus ex altera, asserentes partes ipsae fuisse factas trinas denunciationes in eorum Parrochialibus Ecclesijis iuxtra ordinem sacri concilij tridentini circa matrimonia contrahenda et hoc mane fuisse deventum ad exequtionem matrimonii et immissionem anuli iuxta ritum S.te Matris Ecclesiae." One may add that in an act of two days later Lavina *Cencia* is called "eius uxor," referring to Emilio Morea.

[2] Some say in 1571. In the inscription on her monument in Santa Prassede she is said to have died August 6, 1636, at the age of 63 years, a still more serious error. In his "Nota" already quoted, Francesco Cenci writes: "She was born at Aquila on Friday, August 5, 1570, at the 23rd hour." In his will, made November 22, 1586, he gives her age as sixteen.

nuns and was with them at the time Francesco made the will with which we are familiar (November 22, 1586).

When marrying her to Morea, Francesco gave her a dowry of 3,500 scudi, including the thousand left to her by her grandmother, Beatrice, together with interest, so that the sum came close to that indicated by Francesco in his will. The act was signed "in regione Arenulae et in sala domus Illustris d. Francisci Cincii in qua inhabitat ill. Jacobus eius filius.[1] We have in fact seen how Francesco Cenci, from April 13, 1593, had left his own palace to go to Ripetta.

Besides the 3,500 scudi, Francesco gave Lavinia three rich and beautiful costumes, of a total value of 150 scudi; one was of white satin with point lace of gold and silver, the second embroidered in purple silk on a gold background, the third of silk worked in various colors.

Francesco remained only a short time in the house of Galante in the via Ripetta. In September of the same year he went with his family to dwell in the fine palazzo near the Custom House in the piazza Sant' Eustachio, purchased, shortly after August 19, 1561, by Cristoforo Cenci. This mansion, a building of simple and severe order, designed by Giulio Romano, is still standing.[2]

It had been constructed for Paolo Stati in 1535, but about the time of our story we are told by both Cenci and Guerra that "Patrizio Patrizi inhabited it." At that time, as to-day, there were shops on the street floor from which Francesco drew a good rental, as is seen in his will. It was certainly his decision to take a second wife which induced him to occupy this palazzo of his and to get rid of a certain Secondini of Anagni (of whom we shall soon hear again) and of Maria of Spoleto, who went with her

1 In the region of Arenula and in a hall of the house of the illustrious Don Francesco Cenci, where lives the illustrious Giacomo, his son.—*Trans.*

2 The palazzo passed to the Maccarini owing to the marriage of Anna Maria, daughter of Gaetano, son of Cristoforo, son of Giacomo Cenci, who was married to one of the Maccarani, and from this family it passed, by reason of relationship, to the counts of Brazzà Savorgnan, who are its present possessors.

husband to dwell in a little house at the "Wash-House of Borgo Pio" near the Porta Castello.

The ill-starred creature who made up her mind to espouse the sinister Francesco Cenci was Lucrezia Petroni, widow of Felice Velli; she had nine children: four daughters and five sons, of whom only two, Marcello and Curzio reached manhood. Of the daughters two, Claudia and Porzia, were twins, born in 1590; another was named Gregoria; the last, Olimpia, had married in that year, 1593, Ottavio Tignosino da Viterbo,[1] and therefore was no longer with her mother.

The wedding was celebrated by Don Girolamo Ricci, perpetual vicar of Santa Maria in Trastevere; the witnesses were a Don Silvio Mercati de San Miniato and Pietro, son of Battista Solaro, deceased, of Cina in Valtellina, a plasterer, one of a clan of Lombard Solaros who worked in Rome in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; he was employed at the time in the work on the Belvedere.

Lucrezia was still an attractive woman, although already thirty-eight, short of stature and somewhat stout. She was financially straitened, and Francesco would seem to have conquered her reluctance, if not her repugnance, by his promise to aid her daughters.

Let us note what Lucrezia said in her final examination in the Corte Savella, less than a month before the execution,—to be exact on August 16, 1599: "When I married Signor Francesco I made a convention with him, because I did not want to marry again and I did not want to leave my three daughters, and Signor Francesco promised me that he would support those three daughters until they should be eighteen years old and he promised to keep them in the house with me or to put them in whatever convent I preferred, at my choice, so that I had them put in the Convent dell' Oliva, that is, Santa Apollonia in Trastevere, where Signor Francesco paid their

[1] June 19, 1595, Lucrezia Cenci consented that her brother, Orazio Petroni, should pay 250 scudi which he owed her, to Ottavio Tignosino, to be applied to the dowry of Olimpia.

pension month by month, and this is well-known to Messer Domenico Stella, for it was he who paid the money by order of Francesco, but I think that afterwards when we were at La Petrella, Francesco began to be unwilling to pay, saying that all his income was attached by the creditors, and he told me he was not paying even the keep of the boys who were in school, adding, 'How do you think I can pay for the keep of your daughters!' And in this memorandum I spoke of he had also promised to give them a thousand scudi each at the age of eighteen years, and this memorandum was made by the hand of Domenico Stella and subscribed by Signor Francesco."

Beatrice also confirmed the fact: "Signora Lucrezia said to me often before the death of my father: 'When he took me, he promised to give a thousand scudi each to my three daughters and to make them nuns.'"

The pledge was made in a separate agreement, as we shall see later. The nuptial agreement between Francesco and Lucrezia, drawn up by that same Stella, contains not a word on this subject; the result being that after the death of Francesco and Lucrezia, provision was made for the three girls only with great difficulty, and mainly through the interest in them taken by Ottavio Tignosino, their cousin.

The Cenci-Petroni nuptial agreement was made November 27, 1593. The following day another natural daughter of Francesco was baptised. She had been born six days earlier of a certain Secondina, daughter of Maestro Vincenzo, who had gone to live in Borgo. The child, who was given the name of Caterina,[1] was the last of

[1] In the list of *Expenses made by Signor Francesco Cenci*, by Emilio Morea, is noted, under the date of December 5, 1594: "To Menica nurse of Caterinetta as a final payment, 5 scudi; for a great-coat and silken stockings for Caterinetta before she be sent away, as in her list, .60; for two spans of curtain-cloth for Caterinetta's collars, thread to sew them and little shoes, .60." As I have found no other reference to her, I think that she died in childhood. P. L. Bruzzone (*Per i fratelli di Beatrici Cenci*, in *La Vita*, II, No. 140, May 21, 1906) says that Francesco wished to impose the presence of Secondina upon Lucrezia, under the conjugal roof, and that the latter was resolved not to permit it. He adds that Francesco con-

the fourteen children of Cenci, legitimate and illegitimate.

Matteo Bonavera, originally a gold-wire drawer in Bologna, his native city, was in Francesco Cenci's service from June 1593 till mid-carnival of 1594. Cenci then entrusted to him a letter to be carried to a messer Giovan Paulo Massarelli, his agent in Aquila; he bade Bonavera remain there, as he would soon follow him.

Bonavera on the contrary set out from Aquila and returned to Rome in the afternoon of February 27, 1594 (Sunday), having vainly awaited his master in Aquila, and having endured excessively cold weather. That he might return to Rome, messer Giovan Paulo gave him a scudo and a letter to be delivered to Cenci. Bonavera met Cenci during the return journey; when Cenci saw the man he fell into a rage; then, calming down, he told him to return Wednesday (March 2d), as he wished to send him to Naples. He knew Matteo for a loose-tongued fellow, and wished to keep him at a distance for fear he should make serious revelations concerning him. (This we shall see he actually did.) Bonavera wished to turn his leisure to profit; that very evening, two hours after Ave Maria, as he was strolling with one of his like, he met a certain Mario Bertonelli, Roman, who was tranquilly on his way to buy fruit and fish. He whipped the man's cloak of black serge off his back, and took to his heels with his companion.

Fortune did not favor the ill-doer; next morning Bertonelli entered the Inn of the Bell in the piazza Giudea and there saw Bonavera with his cloak. He pretended

tinued to have relations with Secondina, and that he had by her his daughter, Caterina. On the contrary the fact is that when Lucrezia married Francesco Cenci, Secondina was no longer living with him, and that Caterina was conceived nine months before the wedding of Francesco and Lucrezia, that is, before even their engagement was thought of. It seems certain that Francesco later continued the intrigue. In the same list of "Expenses for Signor Francesco Cenci" are found the items, October 15, 1594, "Paid to Secondina d'Anagni for her dowry, 100 scudi," and on October 19, "Expenses incurred for Secondina, 19.20."

Stairway in Capitoline Prison

not to notice him, but went out and informed the police-court, which sent its officers forthwith, in time to seize Bonavera.

Taken before the judge in the Capitoline prisons, Bonavera recounted his return from Aquila and Francesco's violent anger on seeing him. The judge asked the reason for this, and the other, in replying that he knew of none, let slip this grave and cryptic phrase: it was for fear "that I should say something about him."

"But what can you say about that noble and worthy man that he should have reason to fear you and your presence?" he was asked.

How repeat here what he said and what the other witnesses confirmed? How set down the record of the unspeakable actions which Cenci had not only committed, but committed without any attempt at concealment, in his own house, and with the full knowledge of the servants and of his own sons, still but boys? This much is certain: he had abandoned himself to the most unchecked and bestial acts of lust—with low women (among others with the well-known Maria of Spoleto), with filthy ragamuffins of the street, and with the lower servants of his household.

Our repugnance for this beast and his obscenities is such that during the reading and transcription of the trial sheer disgust has several times interrupted the task; we have been induced to resume it only through the sense of the duty owed by an historian.

Bonavera confessed that Francesco Cenci had often sought by word and act to persuade him to his desires, but what Francesco could not do with him he did with "boys whom he took from the stable." To be specific, he recalled one "was a pallone-maker [1] for the Cenci house," and he recalled another who squinted.

After these revelations the pallone-maker, the squinter, and Maria of Spoleto were arrested. The last was found alone in her house at Porta Castello, for the porter who

[1] Pallone = inflated balls used in a game something like battledore and shuttlecock.—*Trans.*

had married her had, the previous January, stolen a long cloak of Florence serge and a short tunic from one of the lodgers, whom she kept to eke out the household budget, and had then fled. Naturally lodgers had little inclination to remain in such a house; but the lady, jealous of her own reputation, and with reason, said that she had sent them away in order "not to make people talk"; and that "to make a living I have started to do washing."

The examination of the people taken into custody on February 28, 1594, was prolonged, with intervals, until June 10. The interrogation centred especially on Maria, by this time an old acquaintance of ours. At first she denied that she had been subjected to any shameful violence by her master, and only confessed to having had natural relations with him. "I had no husband and he had no wife," she observed, implying that therefore no objection could be made. She added later, "I slept almost regularly with him." Yet she related that one day during the carnival of 1591 "when they were at the Arco dei Cenci" and she was in the kitchen with an old French cook named Margherita, Francesco summoned her to his room, where she saw in a corner "a bad young fellow," and called for an orgy to celebrate the carnival. Upon this she started to scream and succeeded in escaping, but Francesco locked himself in and remained there with the youth. Maria related further that another day, about the same period, being desirous of seeing the races, she asked permission of Signor Francesco, who was walking about in the hall with the same youth. Francesco refused her permission; then he shut himself up in a room with his companion. She kept watch from a distance until the door reopened and she saw them come out together. Francesco kissed the youth "there in the doorway and then sent him off, and he made him go out by the coach-house on the river side." Maria, who considered that she had rights over her master almost matrimonial in character, and who was jealous, as a witness testified at the time, could not restrain herself. We know how outspoken she was. She said wrathfully to the mas-

ter, "I saw it right enough!" She got this reply, "God's murrain on you! Once I take a stick I'll give you all the welts you can carry!" Maria insisted none the less, being eager to leave the house. "Well, then, since you wouldn't let me go and see the races, let me go instead and see a friend from my home who is in Borgo." Cenci refused again, and the pair continued quarrelling; once he had turned his back on her she left the house and went where she wished, that is, to see Erminia of Spoleto, who lived in the Borgo behind the Palazzo Rusticucci and took lodgers. That evening Francesco, together with his coachman, Giovanni Baldo of Pisa, who will reappear in this story, went to dislodge her thence and brought her back home. They did not, however, beat her, for fear, so she believed, that she might talk about what she had seen.

She did not deny that even earlier (before the summer of 1590) she had perceived that the master was indulging in similar foulness with "a young stable-boy" by name Perino of Bologna. He also served at table. She said that she spoke of her suspicions to a certain Cesare di Paolo of Frascati, known as Smuccia (the sneak), who was then in the Cenci establishment as "country-factor," but later entered the service of the Mattei as groom. He had shrugged his shoulders saying, "Well, it has taken you some time to notice that!" Smuccia, examined in his turn, May 3, 1594, did not deny the fact and added that "Maria was jealous of Signor Francesco." He then said that he had seen Perino come out of Francesco's bedroom, "as though to light his lamp from one in the hall, saying that it had gone out, and then back within with the light, and as he was lighting the lamp, Maria said to me, 'Look at Perino how his face is all scratched; the master has been biting?' "

The infamous lusts of Francesco Cenci, growing more and more unbridled, seem to have culminated in the months preceding his marriage with Lucrezia Petroni.

The boy who had lost an eye, and was nicknamed for that reason "The Squinter," attracted his obscene glances while Francesco was still at Ripetta in the summer of

1593. The boy's name was Andrea; he lived with his mother, widow of Domenico of Cortona, just opposite the Cenci palazzo near the Dogana, or Customs Office, in the home of Giuseppe Marzoppini. Francesco, who was having some work done on the walls of the Dogana palace, and was fitting a stable with some rooms overhead, saw the poor boy as he was going to fetch water from the Cenci fountain; he commissioned a companion to ask his intended prey if he would like to go to work for Master Battista Rettini of Padua, the mason who was doing the work mentioned; the squinter accepted. Cenci himself paid him, two carlini [1] a day; the boy was obliged to go in person to Ripetta to get them. It was here that Francesco overcame the resistance of this victim to his desires. The affair had lasted for two months (Francesco had already gone to dwell in the Palazzo at La Dogana) when a dispute broke out between them. Every one in the house, we may add, knew what was going on, and the boy had confessed to Maestro Battista, as later he confessed to his mother, on the day of that dispute, November 2d. Francesco, it seems, ordered him that day to go down to the cellar, where water was standing, and to level off some earth. The boy refused, saying that he would fall sick if he lingered in the damp and dark place. Francesco began to abuse him, as he regularly did when any one opposed his will. The boy fled and as he ran called him "*buggerone*" in the presence of other people.

The squinter later worked as a shoemaker, first at Monte Giordano, then at San Marcello, and later served as a stable boy with the Cardinal d'Aragona at the Arco di Portogallo. And when chance brought an encounter with Francesco (as we have seen, his mother lived opposite the Cenci palazzo at La Dogana) he would take to his heels.

In losing the squinter, Francesco did not lose his vice; he turned to a certain Clemente di Battista Anai, bridle-maker and pallone-maker, his tenant in the palazzo itself, "sought him out" between the stable and the work-

[1] A carline was worth about eight cents.—*Trans.*

shop until he had his fill of him, then told the man, grown indignant, that he no longer wanted him under his feet. He made shameful proposals and even violent attacks upon a woman of Ancona, Battista by name, whom the masons employed to sweep up where the work was being carried on; the detail gives us a measure of her poverty and station in life. Francesco succeeded in dragging her into his "study" and in getting her there several times, to the accompaniment of laughter and pleasantry on the part of the masons and the servants. Their comments reached this Battista, who replied that she did not have to render an account to any one for what she did; they came even to Bernardo Cenci, who remarked that the way his father was taking would not have been his choice. Bernardo was then a little over twelve. We have here another indication of the moral atmosphere of the house.

In her first examination (March 1, 1594) Maria of Spoleto tried to save herself by saying that her relations with Francesco had been, though intimate, natural ("such as plenty of respectable men have," Signor Francesco expressed it), but she revealed his shameful dealings with the "bad young fellow" of whom we have spoken, and with Perino of Bologna. Later, in her examination of June 2, she abandoned herself to painful confessions and obscene details, saying, "When I didn't want to give in to him he beat me with a stick and broke open my head and clubbed me on the shoulders and struck me with his fist so that I was forced to consent." And here our own feelings and our respect for the reader dispense us from telling more; we reproduce only her words to the judge, "I know the penalty which is put upon those who do things like these and have them done to them . . . but now I have thought that the honourable Senator and Your Lordship might still have compassion, knowing what little I could do, a poor woman and a servant of Signor Francesco, while I was in his power."

Clemente Anai, bridle-maker and pallone-maker, arrested and examined forthwith, March 1st, also denied everything at first; but three days later he came around

to a revelation of the familiar infamies. Don Marzio Tommasini, arch-priest of Santa Maria della Petrella and witness in the trial for parricide, tells us that "Signor Francesco was fat." The pallone-maker amplifies the description by saying that he had a bristling beard: "He kissed me with those bristly hairs, and he said to me, 'stay still, you swine!'" Further light upon the abominable customs of the times appears in his reply that Francesco wanted to do with adults those things which one does with boys!

The 2d of March Smuccia also was arrested and interrogated; nor did he contradict Maria's deposition. The examinations of the squinter and of Battista of Ancona followed; they attempted in vain to attenuate their own guilt, never, however, attenuating that of Francesco Cenci. Other incriminating depositions were taken from such witnesses as the mother of the squinter, Messer Battista Rettini, and also Messer Simone Pietro of Bologna, physician of the Cenci household, and two pharmacists in the service of the druggist Bernardini at the Sign of the Sow. The doctor was summoned for information about a cure he was supposed to have given to Maria, the others on account of medicines furnished.

Finally Francesco Cenci himself was arrested March 4th, after the revelations of Matteo Bonavera, Maria, Clemente and Smuccia. He was requested, perhaps through respect for his rank, to present himself at the Capitoline prisons. But first Giacomo Cenci and Emilio Morea, his "son-in-law," appeared at the office and made a plea that Francesco should not be arrested, examined, or tortured, without their first being informed as to the accusations which were being brought. They asked that, upon bail being furnished, he should be allowed to remain at home. No indulgence, however, was shown and Cenci entered the prisons. Giacomo and Emilio Morea returned to the charge, but it was Morea alone who insisted, in writing, that no interrogation should be made of malevolent, rancorous, avowed enemies of Francesco as witnesses; such should not be heard because they could be

of no advantage to the prosecution, nor should they be allowed to prejudice the accused by their moral deficiency. He asked therefore that they be rejected.

Why did Giacomo take no part in this request?

On March 9th Francesco was interrogated for the first time. He gave his age; he spoke at length of his family and his servants; he said that he knew Latin "both to speak it and to understand it." He admitted that he had had lawsuits with his vassals of Nemi, that on that occasion he had been arrested at Aquila, with other details which we know or which are of no importance in the present case. He certainly understood the reason for his arrest, for at first, in recording his servants, he omitted the names of Perino and Matteo Bonavera. But, when he recognised the uselessness of silence he added (*postea dixit*), "I have one more whose name is Perino, who serves me as a page," and still another, a certain Matteo of Bologna, discharged a few days before because "he was lazy and good for nothing and would sleep till midday." In the first examination he said in substance nothing more. Four days later he furnished more details upon the Nemi case, with which we are familiar, and he blamed Evangelista Recchia, that litigious defamer, for his imprisonment.

"I can and I must consider that second kinsman (Recchia) as an enemy, since I know that he has gone about saying that he wanted to use every means that would get my head cut off before I should get a favourable judgment in a case I have before the Rota against him, and I know that he said this before many auditors of the Rota, and all the more must I believe that this is true, when I say I have noticed that it was on the very evening of the day I read that judgment in my favour I found myself here in prison, and therefore I have legitimate reason to suspect that some calumny has been directed against me by him. Evangelista was the husband of my mother and therefore my stepfather, and he managed my property for a long time, and when I wanted to review the accounts in order to have those sums paid to me which

he still owed me, his hatred was aroused against me, but in truth I can not imagine what sort of calumny he can utter against me."

The judge then brought up the name of Cesare of Frascati, or Smuccia; Francesco promptly said that the man was his factor, who had been discharged for "having persistently pursued a servant-girl named Maria of Spoleto to the point that he had intimate relations with her." But then he added concerning the girl, "It has always displeased me to have her about, because, whenever she had a little opportunity, she made free with herself to every one in the house." And yet Francesco entrusted his sons to her! He admitted also that he knew Clemente, the pallone-maker and the squinter, but he had had no dealings with them, except briefly for payments and collections. He then returned to Perino, whom he accused of having stolen a rapier "which had been upon the table in the hall." Finally he declared that he had sent no one to Aquila for five or six months. Matteo Bonavera was the last person he would have sent. When this man had left the house "but a short time since," he had not asked his master for any letter, nor had he received any, but he had said "that he wished to go back home to Bologna."

This last affirmation was soon proved false. On the 15th of March the judge or the notary made a perquisition in the house of Francesco Cenci, and he found there a letter, dated at Aquila, February 23d, and written by Giovan Paulo Massarelli; it began, "The present bearer brought your most welcome letter, etc." Matteo was immediately re-examined and reaffirmed his previous statements. He knew also in a general way what the letter said, because Massarelli had written it in his presence, pronouncing the words he wrote aloud. The witness was removed and Francesco summoned again; he persisted in his denials. But when he saw the letter he was disconcerted; he said that he had never received it, that perhaps Matteo had not given it to him, that certainly he had not read it. Following the customary tactics, the judge abandoned the discussion and asked him point-blank if he had

ever kissed Matteo, if he had taken the squinter and the pallone-maker into his room. Francesco exploded. He had never touched Matteo "with or without lewd intent." *That sort of thing* was not his *specialty*. He denied any relations or dispute of any kind with the squinter, and exclaimed, "If what I say is not true, may God strike me dead on the spot!" What the pallone-maker told was also false, he asserted.

The judge now brought in Matteo, who reaffirmed all that he had said. Francesco cried, "How is it possible that you, being a Christian and having received no wrong at my hands, can say such things?" Maria was again questioned upon what she had said concerning the "bad young fellow" and Perino (she had not yet told of the violence she herself had been subjected to); more furious contradictions followed, which the judge interrupted by closing the session.

The following morning (March 16th) the attack, the accusations, the denials, began once more. What had he done with the squinter? "Ah," retorted Francesco, "he's a fine spectacle, the squinter!"; how could such as he arouse concupiscence? The squinter was set on the stand; he confirmed what he had already said, whereat Cenci began to shout, "You have been taught your words and put up to this by some one!" "Would to God," said the miserable and frightened boy, "that I had no other sin on my soul, for I have told the truth, and I have never spoken to any one, for I did not know that Signor Francesco was arrested!" Then with pitiless promptness the pallone-maker too was brought forth. "I have never kissed him, and I am aghast at such an idea!" And Cenci denied the most serious accusations, crying in frenzy that they were all "vile scoundrels."

Two days later he was again summoned. He attempted a last denial of having received the letter from Massarelli; then, breaking down, he confessed. "Matteo was the one who brought me the letter of Messer Giovan Paulo, which you have shown me, in the month of February just past, and he put it into my own hand in the street in

front of my house." He added that he had not wanted the man in his house and had told him to go away wherever he wished, to Naples or elsewhere. And he abased himself to the signing of this confession, written by the notary, "I, Francesco Cenci, have told the truth . . ." The court-room was in silence; he was about to be led back to prison when he asked to "say a few words and to have them written down, in addition to the examination already made." The sum of the revelations had demonstrated that all resistance was vain; perhaps he was terrified by the thought that the severity of the Pope might send him to the stake, the penalty customary for such offenders (well did the Compagnia dei Portoghesi know that!) [1] Perhaps also he was appalled at the idea of the scandal which was falling upon him and his house only a few months after he had married Lucrezia Petroni and taken back into his home his daughters Antonina and Beatrice from the convent of Montecitorio. In any case he tried to cut the affair short by having recourse to a remedy which he knew to be almost infallible—money! He said, "I say that I know the benignity of Our Lord and also that He loves me dearly, and that in all and through all I confide myself to the will and benignity of His Holiness, not because I have done that which is laid to my door, but because I do not wish to dispute nor contend with His Holiness nor with the prosecution; and therefore I beg Your Lordships that until His Holiness shall have heard this purpose of mine and shall have declared what is to be done, nothing more be effected in this case, and in the meanwhile that I may speak with some of my kin to aid me in having word brought to the Pope and intreating of this matter with His Holiness."

[1] The allusion is to an event that had recently occurred in Rome (August 1578) and the subject of talk again in 1594. A sort of foul rite had been established, according to which a group of Portuguese and Spaniards simulated and consummated marriages between men. See, E. de Montaigne, *Journal du voyage en Italie*, edited by Aless. d'Ancona (Città di Castello, 1889) p. 289; and Fabio Mutinelli, *Storia arcana e aneddotica d'Italia raccontata da Veneti ambasciatori* (Venice, 1856) I, p. 121. It is there said that eleven were arrested out of twenty-seven compromised.

Twelve days before, on March 4th, Morea had pleaded that Francesco should be set at liberty, offering, if it should be necessary, "a suitable bail, subject to the decision of the Senator." But when this concession was refused, he asked that at least "one should not pass to interrogations without the accused being treated as a noble and without his being provided with a list of the questions." The magnifico Signor Antonino Chiarelli, locum tenens, had limited himself to promising to treat Cenci with one special privilege; and that was that he should not be racked. Thus, at first, he paid no attention to Cenci's declaration and proceeded with the trial. On the day (March 18th) that Morea presented himself for the second time to protest in favor of Francesco, he was not accompanied by Giacomo Cenci.[1] The judge questioned individuals whom Bonavera had not named. Who had furnished their names? First came Battista of Ancona, who made one of the filthiest depositions of the trial; then, on two successive days, the squinter's mother and the master mason Battista deposed. On the 29th Cenci was examined again. He temporised: "What do you expect me to say? I say that I am satisfied and that I want the Pope to settle the matter and get me out of these annoyances in whatever manner may seem best to His Holiness." He persisted in his request to the judge, "Do me the kindness to set me free, and I will have three or four cardinals speak to the Pope, and I will placate him." But the judge pushed straight on to new witnesses with the intention of breaking him down still more and preparing him for the shock of a tremendous ransom. He confronted him with Battista. Francesco cursed and protested, then made this appeal: "I have said and repeated many times that this case must be settled by the Pope in whatever guise His Holiness shall choose, because it is not fitting that I, a person of quality, should be tried by the rack, and in case evidence is taken by racking I protest against its being used on me, not because I have not the courage to bear it, but because I am not willing to submit

[1] See p. 43 of Chap. IV.

to such extreme measures in a case like the present." But the trial went on, and April 1st Cenci was put to other interrogations. He insisted: "With all humility I supplicate His Holiness as a benignant and merciful prince to do me the grace to heed to and make settlement of this business and case of mine as may seem best and most pleasing to His Holiness, for as I have many times said and again repeat, I do not beg justice but mercy." He requests that for this purpose he be set at liberty so as "to be able to arrange with my friends and kin for whatever is needful in this case." But there was no change in the procedure, although on April 20 a new intervention took place on the part of Morea, in the presence of Giovanni Giacomo Nerotto, prosecutor-general, Prospero Farinaccio, the famous advocate who was later to defend the Cenci in the trial for parricide, and Gaspare Cicerizio, attorney and counsel for Francesco. On June 2 there was another examination of Maria, who related matters even more damning than those confessed by Battista of Ancona. On June 7, with intent not to make her alter her testimony, but to confirm it, she was stripped, tied to the cord and hoisted. She screamed desperately. "May they kill him this way! Oh, blessed Saint Mary, aid me; oh, oh . . ." (here she made other confessions of outrages undergone) "oh, oh, it's the truth, it's the truth, let me down, for it's the truth." She was lowered lightly (*leviter*—the record states, as usual), unbound, her arms resettled in place, dressed and led away. Then Francesco was introduced again. According to the customary practice, he was first questioned on matters of little or no importance; he told the court, "For the last four years by the grace of God I have never been ill, except that I have had the itch." The talk turned upon baths and doctors; then the master blow was delivered; he was told what Maria had revealed in her last examination. Since he denied all, she was brought back, and the conflict between them descended to the familiar accusations of evil deeds and the usual abuse. Francesco shouted in a last outburst, "I say she lies in her throat like the strumpet she is!";

he had other names for her; and she, who was not a woman to swallow insults, retorted as furiously.

Two days later (June 12, 1594), Clement VIII ordered that Francesco Cenci be released, upon his promise to return immediately to his palazzo at La Dogana, to regard that house as his prison and not to leave it without written permission, under forfeit of 150,000 scudi if he should fail to observe the order. Francesco recognised and countersigned this pledge "in the Criminal Court, in the presence of Cesare Cassano of Imola and Ranuzzo Seghetta of Offida, witnesses." That same day he was remanded to his home.

When the chief offender is released, it is hardly permissible to inflict penalties on others who have been victims of his violence. Therefore the prison doors were thrown open for them also, and on June 17th the pallone-maker, the squinter, Battista of Ancona and Maria went free. The last-named, however, was obliged to remain in confinement in her own house for some time under penalty of being flogged.

Never through the opened door of any sty have filthier beasts come forth.

The sum agreed upon as the penalty was 100,000 scudi. This Francesco collected and paid in less than nine months, scraping together all the cash he could find and establishing with various creditors a debt of 70,000 scudi, for which he was obliged to pay about 6,000 scudi annually in interest. Altogether, added to the sums already paid in other settlements, it was a financial catastrophe.

The 100,000 scudi were paid gradually to the Camera Apostolica before March 14, 1595, so that Monsignor Bartolomeo Cesi, Treasurer-General of the Pope, was able on that day to deliver to Francesco Cenci a final receipt and to declare him freed from the obligation not to leave Rome. Two agreements of Clement VIII were published, by the first of which, of July 13, 1594, Cenci was summoned to pay on account to the Camera 10,000 scudi for the purchase of grain; by the second, of August 15th, to pay for the same reason, 2,000 more; but it is certain

that the agreements were not fulfilled, for we do not find these two payments in the complete and itemised "Record of the moneys paid by the Illustrious Sig. Francesco Cenci to the Treasury of the Camera Apostolica on account of his settlement of 100,000 scudi made in favour of the said Camera"; but we do find, with specifications of the different sums paid, the names of various artisans hired for the work upon the Monumental Vatican palace, in which are now the papal apartments,[1] such as Nicolo Guarisco "for the ceiling of Saint John Lateran," as well as a Marchesa Ragona, the Signori Ubertini, Giuseppe Giustiniani and others, for more considerable sums.

A little more than fifteen years later a group of fourteen sodomites were tried. They had no gold to pay into the state coffers; two were burned and eleven condemned to various penalties. Nevertheless since justice at that time could hardly operate without some glaring flaw or another, one was set free because he was the son of Flaminio Ponzio, architect to His Holiness.[2]

When Francesco returned home he was again covered with the itch. The coachman, Giovanni Baldo, later testified, "When he got out of the Capitol prison he was all covered over with the itch, and he lay down on the bed, for the great itch that he had, and there was I obliged to scrape him under the bedclothes with a cloth from head to foot, and when I had finished scraping him, he made the Signora Beatrice, his daughter, scrape him in the same manner."

He kept with him at the palazzo of La Dogana all his children except Giacomo, who lived with the family at the Monte de' Cenci. In August he sent the two youngest sons, Bernardo and Paolo, the last named then eleven, to lodge with Maestro Americo Poderetti, of Monte San Savino in the diocese of Arezzo. Americo, still a young man, kept a school in a house near the church of Santa Maria del Sole, that lovely little circular edifice named the Tem-

[1] Among others Giorgio Ferro, chiseller, and a certain Pacifici, for supplies of timber.

[2] Orbaan, *Documenti sul Barocco* (June 17, 1610), p. 175.

ple of Vesta. Since Rocco also was absent (or perhaps was kept in hiding for having infringed his exile to Padua or for domestic thefts—matters of which we shall speak later) Francesco remained from August on in the palazzo at Sant' Eustachio with his wife, Lucrezia, his daughters, Antonina and Beatrice, and one son, Cristoforo. This last, however, left him ere long and betook himself to Giacomo; like Giacomo and Rocco, he busied himself in madly piling up debts and begging his father for "allowances."

Beatrice, on the contrary, though little more than seventeen, had already revealed an economical, laborious and energetic spirit. For this reason Cenci had assigned to her, rather than to Antonina or his wife, the care of the house. He entrusted to her considerable sums,[1] without, however, repaying her by any special gratitude, rather, perhaps, by treating her with greater harshness.

[1] In the list of Expenditures made for Signor Francesco Cenci already quoted, drawn up by Emilio Morea, in the month of December 1594 alone 296 scudi were turned over to Beatrice "for household expenses."

CHAPTER V

ROCCO CENCI

The anger of Francesco against his sons, the anger of Giacomo, Cristoforo and Rocco against their father, who lay itching in his bed, haunted by his moral and financial disaster, may be imagined. Francesco railed against their dissipated conduct and accused them of having intrigued against him during the sodomy trial; the young men in turn accused their father of dishonouring the house with his turpitude, of wasting the family's patrimony, and of refusing them sufficient for their needs.

Meanwhile the first thing that Cenci learned on issuing from prison (unless, as is not improbable he was told of it while still there) was that Rocco, taking advantage of his father's enforced absence, had put the house to pillage.

This is the place to dwell for a moment upon this other son of Francesco, he, too, no unfitting son of such a father. When he was hardly full grown, his acts passed from the quality of boyish pranks to savage threats and actual crimes; he roamed by night through Rome, troubling and terrorising peaceful citizens, indulging in the silly and perverse sport of putting them to flight, pursuing them, assaulting them.

July 22, 1592, was an oppressively hot day. Bastiano of San Severino and his son-in-law in the house in the piazzetta di San Tommaso de' Cenci were in bed and already asleep. Terenzia, daughter of Bastiano, restless on account of the hot weather, was wandering about the house half-clothed before seeking her bed. The third hour of night (11 P. M.) had already passed when there sounded upon the door of the house a loud blow, followed by others, as a rain of stones struck the door. Terenzia peered out of a window and perceived Rocco Cenci, who "was idling

about the piazza, clad in his shirt." Bastiano and his son-in-law Menico, aroused from bed, looked down and recognised the stone thrower as one Negroponte, servant of Rocco, who, it appears, was taking this method to avenge himself for an injury done him by Bastiano's son-in-law. Rocco, meanwhile, had drawn aside; but when Bastiano cried, "Your health, sir! Is this the best you can do?" he appeared again, with two servants, likewise armed. Simulating surprise, he cried, "What is the matter? What is all this noise?" Bastiano replied that Rocco knew very well and that it was his Negroponte who was throwing stones. At this Rocco asked: "And you, what have you to do with Negroponte? If I were certain he is to blame, I would be willing to have your son-in-law beat him well and roundly."

"I do not wish," replied Bastiano, "to have my son-in-law brought into this conflict; but I will have the man beaten as is just and proper."

Rocco and the servants were uttering other insults, when Giacomo Cenci, who was sleeping badly owing to the hot weather, went to the window of the palace and began to shout at the disturbers, "What is all this noise? Have you no shame? May you be killed, all of you, scoundrels!"

Rocco and the servants then re-entered the palace.

Rocco, born January 8, 1576, was at this time no more than sixteen and a half; yet he already had had intimate relations with one Artemisia, who bore to him in 1593 a girl to whom was given the name of Cinzia. This girl, as we shall see, was left a thousand scudi by Bernardo, in his testament of September 2, 1599. Artemisia had by then married a miller named Cornelio.

Let us return to a later date of 1592; specifically, to August 2nd.

Rocco happens that night upon some fishmongers in the Quattro Cantoni; he indulges in his accustomed sport of frightening them and putting them to flight. With his two pages, il Forfanicchio and il Lunghetto (the names seem those of demons out of Dante), he follows them,

sword drawn, and catches them up. Beginning to beat them with the flat of the blade, he wounds one, Nicola of Siena, somewhat seriously, in the head and legs.

These fishmongers did not suffer the stupid and shameless aggression tamely; they lodged a complaint against Rocco. He remained in hiding for about two months, seeking meanwhile to make peace with them.

The sentence was proclaimed October 6th; Rocco was condemned to pay 5,000 gold ducats for himself and 200 for his accomplices, and also to go into exile out of the State of Rome. Nor was even this sufficient for Monsignor Desiderio Guidi, Governor of Rome; he ordered that Rocco be given "three lashes of the utmost severity with a rope and in public."

Rocco had no means, and his father refused to disgorge for him; the boy was therefore clapped in prison at Tordinona, where he remained until June 20, 1593. On that day he was banished to Padua for three years, and obliged to make a formal declaration, before a notary, that he would not leave that city without authorisation from the Pope, under a penalty of 25,000 scudi.

But less than six months after his exile and less than a year and a half after his aggression upon the fishmongers, or at about the end of December, 1593,[1] he returns from Padua to Rome without permission, and from the house where he is being hidden, weary of his enforced idleness, sends a memorial to Clement, saying that he begs for mercy because, though indeed he had given some blows with a sword to certain fishmongers, he had been con-

[1] We know that Rocco returned to Rome in December, 1593, from the words of the servant Antonio Sangallo, Roman, who said in his examination of March 19, 1594, "He was here that night and the night before also, but if he was here other times I do not know, for it is more than three months since I have seen him." Sangallo would not have been able to define the time as he did if he had not seen him for more than nine months; in that case he would have said that he had not seen him since he had gone into exile. Further, the fact may be inferred from the words of the servant Emilia de Ricciotti, "Sig. Rocco slept here in this house two nights that I know of, that is, last night and the night before, but I do not know if he has come here other times."

strained thereto by their insolence! He insists that the incident was "slight"; he says that it had occurred two and a half years before. By setting it back about a year in time, the incident gains the effect of distance. The memorial is transmitted to Monsignor Annibale Rucellai, the new Governor of Rome, that he may speak of it to the Pope. Rocco waits for some time without receiving an answer; he then sends a second memorial, repeating that he has been obliged to return to Rome because he has been without means of subsistence, that he is riddled with debts, famished and naked, having been obliged to sell the very clothes he had upon his back.

But such a nature could not long be kept from breaking out; it could not be held in restraint even while he was awaiting the mercy he had invoked. We find him breaking into the paternal home and robbing it at the very time his father was in the Capitoline prisons.

Feeling that his position before the Court was weak, and in fear of a writ of arrest, Rocco did not at first sleep in the palazzo at La Dogana, where lived his stepmother, sisters and brothers (except Giacomo, who had remained at the Monte de' Cenci); but, finding that no action was contemplated, he took courage and, on the evening of March 18, 1594, returned to his own room in his home. The following morning he kept under cover; in the late afternoon he reappeared and asked the servant, Antonio Sangallo, for the house key. The latter informed him that he had orders from Giacomo (the father being in prison) not to give it to him. Rocco grew angry; asserting that he was master as much as Giacomo, he forced the servant to give him the key. Then he entered his apartment, which was on the street side adjoining the great hall. His stepmother sent Emilia de Ricciotti, a Milanese woman called "Milia," to warm his bed; then she too appeared and was standing talking to him when a whistle was heard in the street. Rocco adjusted his clothing as best he could and descended in haste.

He did not wait long in the dark and cold of the street;

the maidservant said that she heard him mount the stairs again, but no longer alone. The servants nevertheless went to bed in the upper rooms.

In the morning Lucrezia and Beatrice perceived that a quantity of things were missing from the sideboards; they realised, as did all the household, that the thief was Rocco; they whispered that his aid in the theft was Monsignore Mario Guerra, relative of the Cenci, who had, as it happened, come the previous day to talk matters over with Rocco. Besides, they recognised as Mario's property a felt hat and a sword which were found in Rocco's rooms. The things stolen, according to Milia, consisted of "four silken hangings, two pieces of shot silk, one yellow, the other blue, a piece of red damask and one of red sarsenet; a priestly vestment of the Apostolic Secretariat, of old rose sarsenet, a long garment of black serge, four cushions of silk and sarsenet, a silver basin, a silver candlestick, four shirts of heavy cloth belonging to Signor Francesco, eleven new handkerchiefs, certain grey towels, and stuffs of good quality, I know not how much." Antonina confirmed in a general way what Milia had said, but the most important examination was that of Beatrice Cenci, then in her seventeenth year. "I know this," she said, "that Sig. Rocco, my brother, last night opened certain presses and that in his company was Monsignore Guerra, according to what I heard tell in the house, by whom I can not now say; only that yesterday evening he was with that brother of mine here in the house, and I heard him speak and recognised him by his voice, for he is our relative; and finally we have found missing in this house fabrics of value, silken hangings, a silver basin, velvet cushions, shirts of heavy cloth, and handkerchiefs; and the valuable fabrics were in the wardrobe and the other things were in the presses; and I think that Monsignore Mario Guerra helped him to take out and to carry away these things because they could not be carried by Rocco alone; nay, I will tell you more, I think that this forementioned Monsignore Guerra was the inventor of all this deed and design, and all this I say is truth."

Yet some have written that the relations between Guerra and Beatrice were those of lovers!

About two months passed before the judges made up their minds to interrogate Mario Guerra, Monsignore and Apostolic Referendery. Indeed it was only on May 9 that the judge and the magnifico Signor Alphonso Tommasino, deputy criminal prosecutor, betook themselves to the palazzo della Cancelleria, where Guerra had his abode as a member of the court or "family" of Cardinal Montalto.

This Cardinal Montalto, who had become in 1589 vice-Chancellor of the Holy Church, had assumed the title of San Lorenzo in Damaso and had instituted the Congregation of its priests. At that time he had quitted his house in the via Parione and had established himself in the palazzo della Cancelleria, for which he had Domenico Fontana build the principal door, with its two columns supporting a balcony.[1]

He was Alessandro Peretti Damasceni, son of Fabio Damasceni and Maria Peretti and hence great-nephew of Sixtus V. He was made Cardinal in 1585 at the age of fourteen; in 1589 he was appointed vice-Chancellor of the Holy See; he was enriched by Sixtus with benefices, abbacies, etc. A most devout and generous man, he constructed the Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle; being desirous of calm, he acquired and embellished the villa thereafter called Montalto; he sometimes stayed in the

[1] The palazzo della Cancelleria came to be called also the palazzo Montalto or palazzo di Montalto while he dwelt in it, as he did for many years. In an avviso of January 12, 1605, we read, "Cardinal Montalto again gave a banquet in his own palazzo della Cancelleria etc."; and in an avviso of Februry 28, 1609, "of the apartment of Prince Peretti [brother of Cardinal Montalto and general of the Holy Church] in the palazzo della Cancelleria." Monsignore Guerra, too, in speaking of the rooms which he occupiel there with his family, was wont to say simply, "my house"; but he himself declared in an examination of December 22, 1602 (after his arrest at Naples of which we shall speak), "I had no house, but I lived with Cardinal Montalto and kept house there." In the great trial for parricide Cesare Bussone repeated, "I found that he (Guerra) was staying in the palazzo de Montalto, in his rooms"; and again, "he was in the palazzo de Montalto"; and he recalls "the rooms of Monsignor Guerra in the palazzo of Cardinal Montalto."

superb villa of Bagnaia near Viterbo, where he entertained Clement VIII and eight cardinals. The Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Dolfin, describes him as "of good mind and good wit, and tenderly loved by the Pope. . . . If he had a better business head, they say, he might govern Rome." He added, "He is an easy-going young man and so given to kindnesses that he neglects almost everything, whence it comes that he has debts of more than 400,000 scudi." A courtly cleric, though of harsh aspect, he had sufficient benevolence to admit to his train, with indulgence and toleration, even persons of ill repute; Guerra was a case in point.[1]

Let us return to Rocco's trial. Guerra declared that he had only learned of the charge made against him in reading the *monitorio*,[2] which he speedily showed to his protector, Cardinal Montalto. He admitted stating that he would go to see the Governor (Monsignor Annibale Rucellai); and declared that the only reason he had not done so was because the Prosecutor, Signor Giovanni Giacomo Nerotto, had assured him that the whole matter would be quashed. He affirmed that neither the sword nor the hat were his, that the sword had already been recognised as the property of a servant of Rocco, and also that, as it was growing late, he had sent a servant to the Cancelleria to get his own doublet and sword, which he had laid on a table, and which he had taken on leaving, as the servants could testify. How could any one believe that, having gone abroad by night, he would return home without his hat? The whole charge was absurd! Nor was it at all strange that he was seen in that house the evening before the theft. He had gone there at the request of Silla Morico, solicitor for the Cenci, by order of Giacomo, and had found Morico in a room which looked toward the

[1] In the *Relatione di Roma* of Battista Ceci of Urbino the Cardinal is described as "of sober manners, so that he is often called hard . . . a virtuous man, very charitable in secret, given rather to idleness than to work; he will not be given trouble . . . he is of kind nature, gentle, placable."

[2] Proclamation calling upon witnesses to give information, under penalty.

Severola. Giacomo had wished him to undertake the smoothing out of some difficulties with a hunchbacked rope-maker whom he had beaten.

With Morico he had found Domenico Stella, notary of the Capitol, Marcello Santacroce, uncle of Giacomo, messer Emilio Morea, Ottavio Tignosino, son-in-law of Lucrezia, and Signor Annibale Carducci. The first to depart were Stella, Santacroce and Carducci, after remaining until the third and a half hour of night and having supped; Rocco also was present. Guerra added that Giacomo had lent him his own mule to return home with, and that they left at the same time. A certain Antonio had taken back the mule, which the stable-boy could not receive because he was locked in; so that Guerra's man returned with the mule, which remained bridled all night. The following morning Messer Silla came to bring him the news of the robbery, whereat Guerra went to see Giacomo at the Monte de' Cenci; and Giacomo told him that "Signor Rocco had returned to Rome to straighten matters out with the Pope, and to show that he had been led to return through sheer hunger, and lack of any provision by which to live, and that it was he who had committed that mean villainy; that it would be a good thing if I should treat with the said Rocco to have him restore the goods and he, meantime, would give him a little money and make a petition to the Pope for him and find some way out; and I went and spoke to the said Signor Rocco, and he told me that they still had the silverware, stuffs and money and be hanged to them!"

How did this trial end? We do not know, but the fact that Mario Guerra, favourite of Cardinal Montalto, was involved in it, leads us to conjecture that everything was hushed up. Certainly Rocco Cenci seems to have remained in Rome, undisturbed thenceforward, as regards the breaking of his exile and the domestic robbery. He kept in hiding for a time, but at about the beginning of 1595 we see him issuing forth from the palace of the Monte de' Cenci and making his way freely about Rome. Francesco Scotusio, testifying on February 19 in Gia-

como's trial, stated that, having gone at Rocco's invitation to the Monte de' Cenci "where he lives," he had found him that very morning mounted ready to go to the Capitol.

As we have seen, Francesco Cenci was set free June 12, 1594. Yet not more than five days later Cardinal Montalto wrote to Clement VIII begging him to remove the young Cenci sons from the paternal influence; "Before my departure from Rome," he says, "I besought Your Holiness that on the occasion of the imprisonment of Francesco Cenci you would deign to take order that this man assign fitting maintenance for his sons, and also marriage portions for his daughters, and that it no longer remain in his power to so mistreat them against reason, lest constrained by need they do actions little fitting to their rank. Hearing now that Your Holiness is making end of a certain case by settlement, I beg this, with all urgency, that Your Holiness, being informed and enlightened upon the evil character of this man, be pleased to decree that such an arrangement be made for these youths that they may no longer have any relations with him; and I think further that it would be an act worthy of the pitifulness of Your Holiness if you would so act that this man can no longer administer nor dispose of anything; since it is certain that he is about to bring to ruin this unhappy family; and I assure Your Holiness that in addition to this being an obligation of justice and pity, you could do me no greater personal favour."

What the good cardinal said of Francesco was perfectly just; not so just was what he said of the sons, themselves a pretty set of rascals. But his pen was guided by Monsignor Mario Guerra, the companion of the adventures of the young Cenci and no less a scoundrel than they. While Francesco was in prison, not only had Rocco turned robber, as we have seen, but his eldest son Giacomo, in charge of the administration of the estate, had committed abuses of every sort.

CHAPTER VI

GIACOMO CENCI

Giacomo, born September 23, 1568, is one of the most sinister figures in this tragic story. Less violent, less ready with his fists, than the other Cenci, he surpassed them all in dissimulation, in trickery, in laying ambushes, and in ascribing his own misdeeds to others. One would call him a poltroon, if the strength with which he bore the most dreadful torture did not secure him from such an accusation.

He began his career of robbery at eighteen, when commissioned by his father to make certain expenditures. Later, pledging his father's word, he exorted 80 scudi from the inhabitants of Assergi, simple shepherds, upon the estate from which Francesco Cenci obtained a considerable income, many servants, and the title of baron. Since the name of this castle will recur fairly frequently in this narrative, we may note that it is the last village one comes upon, at an altitude of more than 800 metres, as one ascends the Gran Sasso from the side of Aquila. It is situated upon a high cliff, to the right of the Rajale torrent. Still a walled town, it is notable for its Romanesque church, sufficiently preserved externally, wretchedly daubed over within, but rich in beautiful fittings and in marble remains of the twelfth century, and with a vast crypt.

Following this episode, Giacomo appropriated to his own use fifteen scudi due to the nuns of Monte Citorio for a month's care of Antonina and Beatrice; he borrowed sums from a priest of Aquila and from another of Rome; he spent thirty scudi for two tapestries because two others, kept in a wardrobe to which only himself and his father had access, had disappeared. His father in his will of 1586 disinherited him, but he persisted in his evil path.

Finally Francesco, on March 5, 1587, forced him to sign a bond for the repayment of 391 scudi, wrongfully appropriated; the declaration reads, "I, Giacomo Cenci, affirm and promise all that is stated above in my own handwriting." Later, as we shall see, he was to confess in the trial for parricide that he had been in prison two or three times for criminal offences and because of difficulties with women.

In 1590 Giacomo broke with his father and took up his residence apart, though always at the Monte de' Cenci. He himself said, in his examination of January 16, 1599, "I have been living separately from my father from 1590 to the present; I was at the Monte de' Cenci, but in another house." In fact Lodovica (daughter of Onofrio Velli, deceased, and Virginia, sister of Cesare Cenci), who was married to Giacomo February 21, 1591,[1] asserted that she had never lived in the house of Signor Francesco Cenci. Francesco sometimes came to visit her and her husband and to dine with them, but only before 1593, when he remarried. Later, from the time when he was imprisoned, he appeared there no more. On March 11, 1592, Giacomo made another affidavit of submission, declaring that in his youth he had committed evil deeds contrary to his father's wish, provoking the paternal wrath, and that from that time forth he would be obedient, contenting himself with what the Rota had assigned to him. The only acts of violence laid to Giacomo's charge were the assaults upon Sergetto and the rope-maker. A circumspect person, he did not, like Cristoforo and Rocco, attack strong men, selecting rather a boy and a pitiful humpback.

We now come to a far more serious episode. We have seen how Francesco, in the trial for sodomy, at first cast the blame upon Recchia for his misfortunes. Afterwards, as the examination proceeded, he made allusions to the

[1] The marriage was celebrated in the house of Cesare Cenci; the witnesses were Girolamo, son of Baldassarre Cenci, Maestro Giacomo Riccio, and Don Pietro Paolo Montano, Roman. In her examination of March 23, 1599, Lodovica Velli said, "I have been wife of Giacomo for eight years."

subornation of witnesses, no longer naming Recchia, as though he had been warned or had come to suspect that others than he were adding fuel to the fire built to devour him. As the trial progressed, had not persons not mentioned by Bonavera been questioned? Who had given their names to the authorities?

Once released from prison, he lost no time in probing the matter, and gradually became convinced that the chief instigator was Giacomo. We do not know what information led him to this conclusion. It is certain that Giacomo's conduct during his father's trial had been, as usual, equivocal. It will be remembered that, on the morning of March 4, 1594, Giacomo joined Emilio Morea in the prayer that Francesco Cenci should not be arrested; yet that afternoon, when the arrest took place, though he presented himself before the judge together with Morea, he allowed Morea alone to sign the new protest; let us also recall that when Morea, March 18 and April 20, put forward new pleas (the second time with the support of Farinaccio), Giacomo made no move. It is true that Ulisse Bartolucci, solicitor for Cristoforo Cenci, stated that Cristoforo and Giacomo had worked for the liberation of their father, but he did not conceal the fact that this information rested on their authority. And although Angelo d'Assergi, formerly a servant of Francesco, adds that "Signor Giacomo sent food and drink to the said Signor Francesco when he was a prisoner," the fact was not one to allay Francesco's suspicions and need not disarm our own, there being no discrepancy between it and an attempt to put the hated father out of the way.

What is certain, in any case, is that Francesco Cenci in a complaint registered January 16, 1595, against his eldest son for having attempted to poison him is quite explicit: "I have been informed that the said Giacomo, my son, worked against me and made an attempt on my life, while I was incarcerated in the Capitol, busying himself in making investigations and informing the sbirri of witnesses who should be examined to my discredit."

Even before this complaint, a good seven months earlier,

when he was just out of prison, Francesco Cenci made no secret of his assurance that his sons were resolved to take his life.

"My sons having turned against me," he wrote on June 23d, 1594, "and I being unable to defend myself, for I lie sick in bed, and am held under bond not to go away, I have been and am now served by a boy called Felice of Assergi; for I have intelligence through Madalena di Pietro of Pesaro, my servant, that my sons have said they wish me dead; and I live in fear lest any night a knife may be struck in my breast, or by some other means my life be reft from me by contrivance and order of these sons of mine."

The judge soon after interrogated this Maddalena, who deposed: "Once when Signor Giacomo Cenci and his wife, Lodovica, were at table in a parlour of the palazzo [1] and I was busy pouring wine and going back and forth from there to the kitchen, I heard Signor Giacomo say, 'What news of Signor Francesco?' Then I heard Felice of Assergi, who was likewise serving at table, say, 'I have pluck enough to kill him some night, etc.' Afterwards I heard Signor Giacomo sitting at table one morning say, 'I should like to put Signor Francesco's bowels on a pike's end.' "

Felice had entered the Cenci household in December, 1593, when a small boy; he was the son of Diego Bigli of Assergi, a tenant of Francesco Cenci, as we have already noted. Francesco Scotusio, the noted solicitor of the Cenci, had this way to say of the boy: "He was brought to the house by another countryman of his, one of those who work up and down the Roman countryside, very unkempt and needy, as all these wandering labourers are, and this man begged Signor Francesco to take the boy, saying it would be well worth his while to put the lad to work, since it cost little to keep him." He was about sixteen, but so boyish and undeveloped that he seemed less; he was called Assergetto or Sergetto. Francesco Cenci said of him merely that "he waits on the ladies,"

[1] At the Monte de' Cenci.

that is to say, on his wife Lucrezia and his daughters, Antonina and Beatrice, since he did not wish to have adult menservants approach them. Others describe him as "the ladies' guard," meaning that he was set as a spy over them by his master. He also served the master at table as his cupbearer and took care of his mule. The boy, a shifty lad, as we shall see, stated in his deposition, "Truth compels me to say that once Signor Giacomo said to me that since I was the one who poured wine for Signor Francesco I could put a little poison in his wine and cause him to die. Another time, after this, I was in Signor Giacomo's house, and he was at table, and his wife and children were there too, and Signor Giacomo said to me, 'Is it possible that that old man (Signor Francesco, his father) won't see reason?'; and then he turned to me and said, 'Would you have pluck enough to kill him?' And I answered him, 'Yes, Signor, certainly I would have pluck enough to kill him.' Signor Giacomo then said to me that I could kill him either with poison or with a knife or, as for that, with an arquebus, when the ladies went to mass, and I could do this because when the ladies went to mass I was left alone with Signor Francesco." This deposition of Sergetto became known, as appears from an examination of Lodovica Velli, wife of Giacomo Cenci; and Giacomo, to avoid arrest, soon took the precaution of going into hiding at the home of Monsignor Guerra, in the Cancelleria; Antonio Sangallo saw him there when he brought him a note by stealth from Lodovica. It was from this hiding-place (in September) that he sent to the "Most Blessed Father" a memorial in which he exposed "how he had been persecuted at the instigation of his father, for some three months; and since there was nothing relevant against him, he begged His Holiness to be pleased to order the Fiscale that he be not molested."

Did Giacomo actually permit himself to say what Maddalena and Sergetto deposed? Are later examinations clear enough upon the knavery of Sergetto and in favour of Giacomo to invalidate the facts alleged? Certainly an arquebus disappeared from Francesco's apartments,

and when he undertook a feverish search for it, it was found hidden in Sergetto's own room; but Cenci merely handed the boy to the police, who took him to the prisons of Corte Savella. Later, not knowing where Giacomo was hiding, fearing some plot at his hands, in fear also of his other sons, he was seized by a mad terror of being poisoned or slain. Being pledged under a heavy bond not to leave Rome, he procures the privilege of not being obliged to inhabit solely the palazzo at La Dogana; frantic and mange-ridden, he ranges to and fro like a harried dog. He begs hospitality of Marzio Colonna in his palazzo, of his notary Domenico Stella, "who lived behind Sant' Angelo in Pescaria," or near the Portico d' Ottavia, and where he can eat his food in safety, for Signora Palma, wife of Stella, prepares his meals; then he wearies of the place or has a revulsion of feeling or conceives some new terror, and goes to San Giacomo degli Incurabili; then he returns to his palazzo at La Dogana, stays there a few days, and, taking with him his wife and daughter, betakes himself to the house of his son-in-law, Emilio Morea, where his meals are prepared by Lavinia, his natural daughter, wife of Morea.[1] Thence he returns to his own house. More than ever the habit grows upon him of hiring and discharging throngs of menservants and maidservants—all rogues, he says, all traitors like his sons. He changes his cooks especially—because they cooked badly, he asserts; the truth is that he recognises poison in every seasoning. Matteo Bonavera testifies that the servants "went and returned and were often changed, and complained loudly of Signor Francesco." But already, before December 12 or 13, 1594, Giacomo di Morio of Città di Castello had let the Courts know that Giacomo Cenci was in the house of Monsignore Guerra. The revelation was made in the course of his complaint against Giacomo for affronts tendered him because he had not im-

[1] In the *Expenditures made for Signor Francesco Cencio*, by Emilio Morea, various foodstuffs are itemised "for the signor when he went away" to the casa Colonna, to the Morea household (where he had an illness), etc.

mediately surrendered a stable key, which he had received from Rocco Cenci, on Giacomo's own order: "Straightway he began to say to me: 'You rogue, you whelp, I will break your head and have you beaten'; so I, being apprehensive of this gentleman, who is young and strong, and knows nought of respect, have come to lodge complaint against him and to ask that he be chastised, for I am a servant to Monsignore Guerra." Giacomo was persuaded to reappear by this accident, by the new accusation his father had brought, and by the fact that, in collusion with Monsignore Guerra he had prepared a whole plan of defence. He appeared before the judge, who consigned him to the prisons of Corte Savella, where Sergetto also had been for six months. The examinations of the witnesses for the defence began the 17th of February.

The first witness on the stand was Antonio Sangallo. He had been employed by Cenci as "Pay-clerk" at the end of October 1592, but on February 6, 1595, had left his service, giving, among other reasons, that he had not succeeded in getting his pay for thirteen months, nor for six months even his expenses, and that he intended to have recourse to justice.

"I left Signor Francesco," he concluded, "because there is no money to be had there, and because he is a disgusting person."

He stated that he was acting as a witness at the instance of Rocco and Cristoforo Cenci, and added that he did not know why they wanted him. "I know Signore Giacomo Cenci and I know that he is now in prison in the Corte Savella and I have spoken with him only once since he has been in prison, that was about eleven days ago." He failed to remember talking with Giacomo about "anything in particular," either on this occasion or when he took him the note "in the palazzo of Cardinal Montalto." He knew that Giacomo was accused of having sought "to poison his father," having heard the fact from the servants of the Cenci household some three months before. Giacomo had then been set free, but afterwards, following his father's second accusation, he had returned to

prison. The witness knew also that in the same prison and involved in the same case was Felice of Assergi (Sergetto), a lying and thievish young rascal, as several had declared to him, among others Santi di Pompa (the reader should try to bear this name in mind) his fellow-townsman, also a servant of Francesco. "Felice once took a brass candlestick in Signor Francesco's house, and once he took some pocket-money from a stable-boy and then confessed it to him, and another time he took a key hung up in the hall, and he told lies; my memory is not good enough to tell you what they were, but when he did errands he always mixed them up with lies. . . . I think he is a man who would tell lies even though he had sworn to tell the truth and knew the importance of the oath, because it is his nature always to lie." For this reason he thinks that the boy's deposition against Giacomo "is false, vain, and unlikely." Sangallo thought that the stolen arquebus belonged to Signor Francesco. "I have never seen an arquebus belonging to Signor Giacomo," while on the contrary Signor Francesco "had three long arquebuses and a pistol." Asked if he knew that Giacomo had beaten Sergetto, he said that he did. Francesco beat the lad when he came out of prison "and has threatened to beat him again and that for his poor service." Also, "I saw him once strike the boy three or four times in the loggia," about the beginning of July 1594, and "another time I saw him kick Sergetto downstairs." In regard to the words spoken by Giacomo at table against his father, reported by Maddalena of Pesaro and by Sergetto, he said, "I have seen Signor Giacomo at meals with his wife and family, and I have never heard him say defamatory, much less threatening, words; of course it might be that he uttered threats without my hearing him."

The following day, February 18, Angelo di Pietro, about fifty years old, also of Assergi, was placed on the stand. He testified that he had left the Cenci house on account of illness, after having served Signor Francesco for about three years; having passed his convalescence in prison on the complaint of his master, he had the effront-

ery to present himself again, about the end of June 1594, asking to be taken back into service; it was then that Francesco informed him that "he wished to leave Rome and to rent everything and he had no more need of outside porters."

This Angelo, who had been brought in as a witness through the instrumentality of Cristoforo Cenci, brother of Giacomo told the Court how he had passed before the Corte Savella when Sergetto, who was standing behind a grating,[1] called to him and begged him "to speak to the Guardians of the Capitol, and ask them to give him a little money." When Angelo asked him for what reason he was behind the bars, "he replied that he was a prisoner because he had found in the house an arquebus without a wheel and that he had put it in his own room, and that Signor Francesco had seen it and had had him put in prison, and had made him stay there eight months."

"Did you know before that Sergetto was in prison?" the judge asked Angelo of Assergi.

"Yes, I knew it; in fact when I got out of prison, June 25, 1594, I learned that Sergetto had come in the day before. The one who told me was Lucrezia, wife of Signor Francesco, who told me that he had gone to prison on account of the arquebus."

"Why were you in prison yourself?"

"I think it was on the ground of defamation of character. Francesco was angry, claiming that I had gone around talking about 'his friendship with a certain Secondina.'"

This question of the judge was put to Angelo d'Assergi to ascertain if the latter, who had come to testify in favour of Giacomo Cenci, had any reason for resentment against Francesco, and not, as some have thought, because Secondina might have been the one who had warned Francesco that his sons wished to kill him. Had not Francesco as

1 Prisoners were often permitted to stand at the gratings and talk with the passers-by, and, if they were poor, to ask for alms. This custom is evident from ancient paintings and engravings; it is also mentioned in chronicles and numberless documents.

early as June 1594 declared to the judge that the one who informed him was Maddalena di Pietro of Pesaro? On the other hand, if the judge also questioned the other witnesses about Secondina, he did so to discover whether the loose talk of Angelo was slander pure and simple or whether it had a foundation of truth. Ulisse Bartolucci, solicitor for Cristoforo Cenci, deposed, "This Secondina was in service with Signora Lisa Foschi until Signor Francesco fell in love with her and asked her to enter his service. She came and stayed with him; but he no longer has her in his house and I do not know if she has been or is now mistress of Signor Francesco. When she was with Signora Lisa she was a good girl and of good behaviour, but now I know not what she may be." Francesco Scotusio, solicitor of the Cenci, added, "I know this Secondina; she was once the servant of Signor Giulio Fosco. . . . I have heard it said that Signor Francesco Cenci kept this girl as concubine." Worse still was the testimony of Antonio Sangallo: "I have heard it said that this Secondina was mistress of Signor Francesco, and that she got a brat by him, and that she is a person of evil life, condition, and reputation." The "brat" was Caterinella; we have seen that she was baptised the day after the wedding of Francesco Cenci with Lucrezia Petroni.

The judge's other questions concerned the conduct of Sergetto and the character of Giacomo Cenci, as did the questions put by him to Antonio Sangallo.

Angelo, a fellow-townsman of Sergetto, said of him that he could not affirm of his own knowledge that Sergetto was a liar, but that other peasants had so described him. Yet he added, "Once I lodged him and the solicitor in my house and he took thirty-two giulii [1] from me. I told his father about it, and he sought out the boy and found the money and gave it back to me." Then, "Before I went to prison I once saw Signor Giacomo kicking and beating this Felice, I know not why, and heard him say to him, 'Begone from here, never come here again. . . !' When

[1] A giulio was worth, roughly, ten cents.—*Trans.*

Signor Giacomo said this to Felice he was in the palazzo at La Dogana. Others present were Antonio Sangallo and Giovanni of Romagna."

Ulisse Bartolucci, also summoned by Cristoforo Cenci, knew Sergetto; he had seen him in the house of Signor Francesco. Again during Lent of 1594 the witness, being himself confined in the Capitol, had seen Sergetto come to do some work for Cristoforo, who was likewise a prisoner there. (Was there any member of the Cenci household, master or servant, who was not acquainted with the inside of a prison?) "From his appearance I judge him a knave," said he; he told of lunching one morning with Signor Cristoforo, who, missing a package which he had put on the bed, began to dispute with the servants. Then the witness said to Sergetto, "You took it; put it back where it was." The package reappeared in its proper place.

Francesco Scotusio also had heard it said that Sergetto was a knave, a base liar, a backbiter; Antonio Sangallo likewise deemed him a mean thief and liar by nature, to such an extent that he considered his deposition against Giacomo to be "false, vain and unlikely."

All these witnesses for the defence went further still and sounded the praises of Giacomo. Angelo d'Assergi called him "a pacific gentleman"; Bartolucci: "I consider him a noble gentleman of kind character, a quiet person, no subject of scandals"; Sangallo: "He is of good life and repute"; and Scotusio: "Of good character and reputation." All four declared to the judge that they did not believe that he had "ever done or caused to be done any wrong, or committed or caused to be committed any unlawful deed," they replied when further pressed by the Court that at least they saw no evidence to make them believe the contrary. The case was drawn out with much talk of the relations between father and sons, with the disputes over living-allowances, the disappearance of the arquebus, all matters which we have dwelt upon. Scotusio supplied the additional detail that one of the many

complaints made by Francesco against his son Giacomo was that the latter had married Lodovica Velli without his due permission.

The court dismissed as not proven the accusations made by Francesco Cenci on the word of Maddalena of Pesaro and Sergetto; it freed Giacomo, who had spent two months at Corte Savella. Giacomo declared four years later, "I was released with a decree of 'not guilty' granted to me by Monsignore Annibale Rucellai, Governor, and his judges, as appears in the Acts of the Governor." He adds that during his stay in prison he believes he was confronted with Sergetto. In any case, of that part of the trial which was conducted in February 1595, there remain only the testimonies for the defence which we have dealt with and which were collected in separate books.

The court released Giacomo Cenci, favoured as he had been with special conditions and protection. Four years later we shall see the trial exhumed and once more made the subject for acrimonious debate.

Other suits between Francesco and his sons were pending in the meantime: there were suits for the payment of the sons' debts, others for the attribution to them of allowances for maintenance. There was great discussion about them in the Vatican, in Roman society generally and even among the many servants of the Cenci household; nearly all the talk took a turn hostile to Francesco. Yet he had obtained in the Rota a favourable decision in respect to the payment of his sons' debts; credence was given his affirmations that all these debts had been made through gaming and frauds; to these we might add another word which decency will not permit, although Francesco, with his habitual grossness of expression, had dared to write it even in a petition to the Pope.

Francesco was only partly in the right. His sons were obliged to contract debts, not only because of the insufficiency of their monthly allowances, relative to their rank, but, in Giacomo's case, because of his already numerous family. He had at the time three children, one

boy and two girls, and it is certain that they often lacked for necessities." But was Francesco likely to care for the straits of his sons arrayed against him, when the two youngest ones, who remained at home until the Spring of 1595 and were then boarded in school, were sometimes as ragged and scantly clad as beggars? Orazio Pomella, deputy for Giacomo in many matters, and who kept a tailor-shop in the Piazza de' Catinari, was mightily concerned on the subject. If the rich acted thus, he argued, nought remained for tailors but to die of hunger.

Giacomo, with Cristoforo and Rocco, their malevolence now quite unbridled, revenged themselves on their father by egging on his creditors. He once more had recourse to Clement VIII, writing to him personally that "his sons, not content with harassing him by civil and criminal actions, and having no greater desire than that he should die, that they may remain masters of everything, are every day seeking out the creditors of the petitioner, and urging on the creditors to take action against him, to make him flee from Rome, in order that the petitioner may not pursue his suit against his sons (concerning the living allowances) which is before the Rota, where it has already been decided that he is not obligated to pay the debts incurred by his sons aforesaid, which were all incurred through gaming . . . frauds and other illicit deeds."

To follow the two long suits step by step would be an arid task, tiresome to the reader, as well as useless in its trite detail.

Giacomo Cenci, in his examination of January 16, 1599, says that the trials began in 1594. The clause inserted by the father for Luzio Savelli in the nuptial agreement of Antonina shows what were the relations between father and sons in that year: "Many grievances have arisen, as is public and notorious, between Francesco and his sons, on account of which he cannot reasonably and should not see them, nor have to do on any matter with them; therefore with all love he begs and supplicates the most illustrious Signor Luzio that he may be content to

undertake forever the protection of Signor Francesco, and always to defend him in all just and reasonable things, and not to have dealings with his sons aforementioned, nor give them pledges of any sort whatever for any sum however small in favour of any person whatsoever, seeing that the demeanour and conduct which the said sons have maintained toward Signor Francesco deserve that the said Signor Luzio as an honourable kinsman of Signor Francesco should observe this article."

At a certain stage the examination and the decision of the suits concerning the allowances for maintenance were entrusted to Cardinals Mattei and Aldobrandini; Francesco must have trembled for the outcome, the more so as he intuitively realised that hidden powers were working for his sons. We already know of the letter of Cardinal Montalto, a man of great influence with Clement VIII because he had been his Grand Elector in the conclave. Francesco also realised, all too surely, that public opinion was on their side.

Their claim, in fact, was upheld. Francesco was obliged to assign 100 scudi a month to Giacomo and his family and 80 scudi each to Cristoforo and Rocco.[1] This decision was made by the Cardinals Mattei and Aldobrandini; Rocco learned it from Monsignor Glorieri barely an hour before he was slain.

As Francesco did not pay, the Cardinals, by order of Clement VIII, commissioned the Auditor of the Camera (this was Camillo Borghese, later Pope Paul V) to lease the hamlets of Torrenova and Testa di Lepre to Viperesco Vipereschi, Conservator of Rome, with the charge that he should open an account of 16,000 scudi for the payment of the young Cenci's living expenses and debts.

[1] *Relazione intorno alla famiglia Cenci.* Raffaele Luttazzi here cites the "Atti di Giov. da San Giorgio notary of the Rota, April 3, 1595." But we have not succeeded in finding the name of that Giov. da San Giorgio among the notaries of the Rota. Yet it is to be noted that many Acts have been lost before the founding of the State Archives.

CHAPTER VII

A WEDDING AND A DUEL

In the first days of November 1594 the Cenci household, saddened by domestic strife and menaced by the results of its squalid lawsuits, was lit by a ray of sunshine—the last hour of gladness this tragic family was to know for many a day. Antonina, born May 30, 1573, daughter of Francesco and Ersilia Santacroce, was affianced and wed to Luzio Savelli, who had been husband of Placidia Colonna until her death more than two years before. The preliminary agreement, which was to be converted into a final notarial document when definitely settled, was drawn up between Cenci and Savelli, "Roman baron and lord of the castles of Rignano, Forano, Civita Castellana"; it stipulated that Cenci should give his daughter a dowry of 20,000 scudi. It is unnecessary to record the particulars in detail; enough that provision was made therein that, in case of the death of Antonina without issue, this sum was to revert to the Cenci. Morea went to Rignano, where Savelli was living, to conclude these arrangements; he entered in the accounts (he was then solicitor for the House of Cenci): "Expenses for the journey to Rignano, in the first part of November 1594, for three days, when the alliance with Signor Luzio was concluded: scudi 10.20." At the same time Antonina sent two costumed dolls, as a pledge that she would be a mother, not a stepmother, to the little daughter of Savelli by his first wife, Placidia.

Luzio Savelli betrothed himself to the daughter of the Cenci without ever having seen her, and in obedience to a suggestion of the Pope. Nevertheless he asked his sister Sofonisba, married to one of the Strozzi, and his aunt, Giulia Orsini Anguillara, to inform him promptly about the physical and moral qualities of the spouse. The two

replies, both dated November 18, 1594, give a charming picture of Antonina; they make us regret that there is no similar description of the person of Beatrice.

Sofonisba calls her face quite lovely, but regrets that she has a short neck, a defect the more sensible in those days when a long neck was admired in women. "If her neck were two finger-breadths longer she would be quite beautiful in my judgment." And again, "It seems to me wise that, since the betrothed remains here, your Lordship should come and see her, previously making an arrangement with Signor Francesco, and meanwhile your Lordship should write to her often and send her game from the country. One can certainly say much of the good qualities of the spouse and still leave a great deal to be told, and I think that Our Lord has made provision for your needs by so much good nature, composure, and gaiety, in one inured rather to evil fortune than to good." If to be inured "to evil fortune rather than good" be a merit, the Cenci household was a good school! Sofonisba concluded, "I have been twice to see her and at this moment I have returned therefrom more satisfied than ever."

Giulia Orsini Anguillara, Luzio's aunt, uttered similar praise: "Your letter, received this morning, rejoiced me greatly; I have already been to visit the betrothed: I could not help it. My dear friend, I tell you freely and in all sincerity that I am more than satisfied in every respect. She is of good presence, buxom and tall, a fine skin without blemish, fine teeth, black eyes; it is indeed true that since she is a little stout and since girls now commonly walk with their heads hung she seems to have but little neck, like Messer Pompilio's wife; not that your betrothed is so fat and she is by far whiter and more beautiful, but her person is of that type. What is of more importance, I see in her a good heart without folly, so that I do not think she will ever wish anything apart from what Your Most Illustrious Lordship desires." She closed with the words, "In short I am thoroughly reassured."

Antonina, as the betrothed, wrote to Savelli asking him

to come to Rome; he replied in a letter of somewhat ceremonious cast, but full of amiability. To omit it here would be like refusing to gaze upon a patch of azure in grey and tempestuous weather. "Your letter came to my hand yesterday; and if your worthy father had not enjoined me to inform him of my coming a day in advance, I would have come straightway; so I write that Your Ladyship will know my desire and that I will be in your presence to-morrow, which will be Sunday evening, as you have been pleased to command me. I desire to be treated as an intimate from the time when I shall know myself to be loved, if not as much as I love, at least as much as your courtesy and most amiable nature lead me to expect. The hope I cherish of soon seeing you will cause me to pass this intervening time in the most happy manner possible; I pray that you too may do the same, and may believe that I would fain sleep through these days of the banns, foes to our happiness, which still intervene. And so I kiss your hands as I do also those of my lord, your father, of Signora Beatrice and of Signora Lucrezia, and I pray God that he may fulfil our desires. Rignano, November 26, 1594. From your loving consort who will ever be your servant." To indicate to her his felicity in this wedding he superscribed the letter: "To my beloved consort, Signora Antonina Cenci-Savelli, Rome."

Morea kept account of various expenditures for the visits of Luzio to Antonina and for their nuptials: Nov. 9, 1594, "To the handkerchiefs bought for Signora Antonina, betrothed, scudi 8.90; to the collar for Sign. Antonina, betrothed, scudi 8.90; to the hairdresser of Sign. Antonina, .30; to the first banquet for Signor Luzio Savelli, given to Gio. Diletto to expend for the victuals, not including the pastry, 30.00; Nov. 24: to Sign. Antonina's hairdresser, .30; Dec. 5: to Simon the carver for his service for two evenings, 3.00; to Sign. Antonina for the flowers for her head, .40; to pastry, etc., 16.00; to other expenses for these banquets for the nuptials of Antonina, 3.00."

The notarial attestation, which transformed the terms

agreed upon into a "public instrument at the hand of a notary" by the act of the presentation of the ring, was drawn up by Domenico Stella, January 18, 1595.

But fate seemed to have forbidden happiness of any sort to the Cenci family. Poor amiable Antonina died in childbirth at Rignano, on the 9th of September, 1595, a bare nine months after her marriage.[1]

Rocco Cenci's grotesque and vainglorious habit of frightening and pursuing peaceful citizens finally cost him his life. About the time he robbed the paternal home he thought fit to repeat his inane sport of hunting men through the streets, already so disastrous in the affair of the fishmongers, with Amilcare Orsini, natural son of Count Alessandro of Pitigliano as his quarry. Amilcare, still a boy, had been sent to serve as a page in the house of Cardinal Montalto; there he remained about a year. One night Rocco, followed by two of his bullies and the inevitable rascal Guerra in disguise, met him in the piazza Navona. "Let's make this fellow run!" said Rocco. He drew his sword and began to beat his victim with the flat of the blade. Amilcare resisted the first two blows; then, seeing himself outnumbered, took to flight. Rocco pursued him, but finding himself at a favourable angle of the street, Amilcare, in turn, drew his sword and defended himself so resolutely that his assailants withdrew. None the less Rocco went about the next day and later, recounting with his customary air of braggadocio how Amilcare had fled, he embellished his tale with many witticisms. Amilcare, hearing the tale repeated, took umbrage, asserting that he would have Cenci set the matter in its true light; and admit the truth, that he with the support of others had made an aggression upon Amilcare when alone. Rocco chose to continue his tone of derision, but he was advised by the same Guerra "to keep his wits about him because those Pitigli-

[1] "*Nota* . . ." by Francesco Cenci, already quoted. *Bertoldi* and *Rinieri* err in stating that her death occurred after that of her father.

anos were vindictive folk." Sure enough, young Amilcare did not return to the palace of Cardinal Montalto, but went to the house of one Alicona "who was a great partisan of the Signor Conte," in a building in the palace of the Gran Duca. Gian Paolo Nobile of Fermo saw Amilcare and spoke to him from an opposite window; having learned the whole story, he hastened to warn Fabio Castellucci di Cagli, agent of the Count of Pitigliano. The two then sought out Amilcare, who repeated to them what had happened, saying he was disposed to make peace whenever Rocco should tell the truth. They next went to inform Fabio Orsini; and the youth was obliged to return to Pitigliano, devoured with hatred of the miscreant Rocco. It now availed Rocco little to remove from Rome or to go into hiding, after his robbery in the home. His new enemy was always on the watch, breathing vengeance rather for Rocco's boastings at his expense than for the blows he had received. He reappeared in Rome, March 8th, 1595. The vigilant Guerra learned of this; and happening to see Captain Camillo Pavone of Tolentino strolling through the portico of St. Peter's with his companion, Captain Niccolo Marzollo, accosted the pair. He turned the conversation to Rocco's assault, and begged Pavone to intercede for peace. He said that the matter was of concern to Cardinal Montalto as well as to himself. This seems not to have been the case, the Cardinal, as we shall learn, holding Rocco in contempt.

Pavone promised to busy himself about the matter; he sought for Castellucci and found him at "the Banchi"; Castelucci refused to be mixed up in the affair, and may even have been exciting Amilcare to revenge. After the death of Rocco, in fact, he was kept in solitary confinement (probably with torture) for one month and under close observation for another.

Rocco was killed March 11, 1595. Accompanied by Silla Morico, whom we have met, and three servants (Ulisse di Marco of Piacenza, Silvestro and Taddeo) he had just been to visit Monsignor Glorieri to learn something with reference to his suit against his father for

maintenance; having received a favourable reply, he had gone to Corte Savella, where Giacomo was prisoner, to communicate it to him.

He was returning home, about noon, when he met Amilcare Orsini at the Regola, at the corner of Santa Maria in Montecelli. There were two servants with Orsini, one of whom was Emilio Ferrini, called Marangone;[1] all were dressed in black. Amilcare stepped in his path, saying, "Rocco Cencio, what you have said was not well said; put your hand to that sword." Rocco's three servants stepped forward, but Orsini's two servants said, "We have nothing to do with this; stand back!" To this Rocco assented. All drew back leaving the duellists on guard. A barrel-carter, Antonio di Tommasso, a Piedmontese, who happened to be passing, was a chance witness of the affair.

The duel was courageous on both sides, but brief. During the first onset Rocco's sword broke in two, while the other drove his point violently into his opponent's right eye and brain. Rocco fell without uttering a word. Silla Morico, horrified, turned quickly to Silvestro, the servant, and, taking a bottle of wine which the other was holding, ordered him to run to the church in search of a priest. A priest with a red beard, of the parish church of Santa Maria in Monticelli, ran up and bent over the dying man, telling him repeatedly to speak the name of Jesus—only the name of Jesus! But "Sig. Rocco could never answer anything and breathed his last." Amilcare meanwhile held Rocco's companions at bay until he had made his escape. A crowd of men and women gathered about the dead man, and the priest present asked them to pray for his soul. The body was carried to the Cenci palazzo, not far away, where the surgeon verified the one wound and left a written statement that the deceased was a beardless youth and that, on being brought to the Cenci palace, he had been laid out on a table. He was wearing smallclothes and doublet "of patterned velvet, undercloth-

[1] The Cormorant.—*Trans.*

ing of grey silk, stockings of silk, also grey, and a shirt with frills." [1]

Since the affair had had a fatal outcome, perhaps contrary to Amilcare's own intention, the assailant fled from Rome. With him fled his servant, Marangone.

Luzio Savelli sent his condolences to Francesco through the agency of Messer Zeffiro. (Luzio Savelli, as we have seen, had been married to Antonina for barely two months.) Francesco replied on March 14, 1595, attributing the occurrence to Rocco's rashness and expressing regret that the boy had died without confession or viaticum, so that God alone knew what had happened to his soul. He further exhorted his son-in-law to comfort Antonina, and concluded that everything on earth was delusion, grief and anguish, so that the blessed Lord alone could give us patience to support our troubles. Finally he informed him that others of his sons (Giacomo and Cristoforo), engulfed in debts and lacking credit, were planning to make a journey to him at Rignano, "with all the more reason from the need they are now in through the death of the aforementioned Rocco." Luzio should cautiously and prudently refrain from having aught to do with such people, because "they never come to any good who act against their father." He was pleased that Antonina showed signs of being with child.

It is difficult to make sure how far Francesco was grieved. The most perfidious men have written and still write similar phrases in like contingencies. To be disposed to look kindly upon Francesco merely for this reason is surely ingenuous, when we know how virulent was his attitude the day before, and that it was no less so the day after. There have been many conversions and repentances of perverse souls, but the penitent must show a complete change of life if we are to credit a change of heart. He

[1] Bruzzone writes that Francesco was not moved, but took "the lace-trimmed cloak and went away," while Beatrice and the brothers were upstairs beside Rocco's body, and that Artemisia arrived crying wildly with her little daughter, etc., etc. It is all invention. For one thing Francesco and Beatrice lived elsewhere.

who groans and casts himself upon God when confronted by a misfortune or a danger and then returns to his old infamies the moment his troubles have vanished, must be either feigning or be imbued with superstition rather than religion. Francesco was a superstitious man and as such believed that he could atone for his iniquities by making bequests to churches and convents. What is more, in the letter to his son-in-law he does not so much express pity for his dead son as inveigh against his living sons, and hold them up to the contempt of Savelli.

Antonina, that gentle creature, must have felt the tragedy far more. In fact we find her new kinswoman Sofonisba consoling her in a letter full of sympathy, of the 6th of April. Sofonisba wrote first to her brother Luzio rather than to the wife, in order to distress her less, but she thought that Antonina's affliction must be deep. "I beg you to be willing to submit to God's will"; let her think that she has other brothers and a husband who "loves her as his own life."

Of Marangone we shall speak later. We now give some heed to Castellucci.

The trial for the death of Rocco was begun the very day of the murder. First, two of his followers were taken into custody and examined in the Corte Savella; then Castellucci was taken. Others also were called upon to testify. Ulisse di Marco of Pienza described the duel and told how Rocco died. "I took his cap, and I got my stockings bloody, as you can see." He referred also to the old reason for the ill-feeling between Rocco and Amilcare; but the judge thought he was not telling all he knew and sent him to the rack. Failing to extract from him more than he had already told, the judge ordered him hoisted. The sufferer cried, "Jesu, Jesu!"; but the judge, unmoved by his cries, had him lowered and raised a second time; the third time he had him stretched and shaken. The victim twisted and howled, "Ohimè! Oh, uh, uh!"; then, "You can kill me, but I know no more!"

On March 11th Silla Morico, solicitor of the Cenci, was examined. He said that he and Rocco were returning

home in good spirits because of the outcome of the "suit about the debts and maintenance against the father of Signor Rocco," when "on passing from the alley of the piazza de Monticelli in the same place where they are building a new house which makes a corner" they met Orsini "who was of the same height as Sig. Rocco and had no beard, dressed as a gentleman in black." Silla's statement was entirely voluntary, the judge put no questions to him; much less did he send him to the rope. He treated the Piedmontese barrel-carter in the same way.

A week later Fabio Castellucci was arrested by Captain Domenico, alias Grincio, chief city constable, in the Banchi. The officer searched him, finding in his pockets "a number of letters, one corona [1] and a key." On March 19th he was questioned on his record; it was found that this was far from clean, as was the case with almost every one in those days. He confessed that he had already been in prison three other times, but, naturally, in every case unjustly. He told of a conversation he had had with Captain Camillo Pavone, who had told him that Cardinal Montalto was anxious to have the dispute between Amilcare and Rocco smoothed over. He affirmed he had replied that Signor Alessandro Orsini too asked nothing better. It was true that he had had a second conversation with Pavone, but that was only when the killing of Signor Rocco had already taken place and without his being aware even that Amilcare was in Rome. Besides, he had been trying to make peace a long time back! He added that he had seen Amilcare at Pitigliano after the affair the three or four times he had had occasion to go there.

The judge made a great point of the date of the second dialogue, suspecting that Castellucci would have had time to prevent the fatal encounter had he wished. Other evidence later seemed to indicate that he had encouraged Amilcare and approved of all that had taken place, and that he had written of it almost with satisfaction to Amilcare's father, Alessandro Orsini. In fact

[1] A small coin.

one of the letters found in Castellucci's pocket was a reply from Orsini written March 15, 1595, from Fiano; it began: "My very dear Magnifico: I praise highly your diligence, and I have been very glad to hear that the Illustrious Cardinal Montalto has received and taken in such good part the business of a certain person, and in truth it seems to me that he could not have done otherwise for various reasons. The horse is being sent to you; and the number of menservants, if I have not told you, is six . . ." It seemed to the judge that the letter alluded to the duel and that the horses and menservants had been sent for the escape of Amilcare. He therefore showed the letter to Castellucci, who recognised it, but said he did not understand what the sentences referred to.

However, he admitted on April 13th: "I have recalled that I wrote His Excellency three or four days after Signor Amilcare killed Signor Rocco Cenci, and in that letter I said that as the business between those two had taken place in an honourable manner, Cardinal Montalto had taken it well. And His Excellency replied to me what is contained in the letter which Your Lordship showed me in the examination" [of April 3d.] The judge asked him from whom he had learned this opinion or attitude of Cardinal Montalto; he concocted a story according to which, happening to be in the Banchi on business, he had heard three or four gentlemen, whom naturally he did not know, saying among themselves that Montalto had "taken it well" that everything had gone off in an honourable manner. He had then informed his lord of this fact, and his lord had replied with the confiscated letter. The judge asked him who had brought him the letter. Castellucci of course could not say, having been away from his house when it was brought him.

Castellucci's story was packed with perjuries and concealments of truth. Since he persisted in them, even in his examination of May 23d, the judge had him bound and hoisted.[1] . . . "Oh, Lord God, aid me, as I am inno-

[1] The torture of "the rack," or "the cord," as applied in Italy, differed from the form familiar to readers of the old English state

cent . . . Lord God, aid me as I am innocent . . . My innocence, Lord God . . . I ask Thee nothing, only my innocence. . . ."

The judge in fact was torturing him merely to get more ample testimony, not because he believed him an accomplice in the crime; no doubt now existed as to the facts of the duel. He had the victim lowered again. And this, it seems, was the end of the whole case.

Amilcare Orsini outlived Rocco only four years.

It is well known that Virginio Orsini di Paolo Giordano, Duke of Bracciano, was sent in 1599 with five Tuscan galleys on a cruise in the Levantine seas. Virginio was one of the most conspicuous personages of that celebrated family, which marched in the ranks of the cardinals at Roman festivals, preceding the bishops, and which had the right of being offered incense on entering the Papal chapel. He arrived one night at the Island of Chios and disembarked three hundred men. At first the inhabitants fled in terror; but when day came and they perceived how small was the fleet, they fell in great fury upon the landing-party; all did not succeed in reaching the galleys over the stormy sea. More than a hundred were killed and taken prisoner; among the dead was Amilcare, not yet twenty years old, whom Virginio, knowing his courage, had brought in his personal suite.

trials before the middle of the XVII century, when it was finally abolished in the case of the murder of the Duke of Buckingham by John Felton. In the latter, the victim was laid prone and his arms and legs stretched by means of levers. In the former, the arms were tied behind the back in such manner that when the examinate was raised off the ground, the entire weight of the body rested upon the shoulder joints, wrenched violently from their sockets. Hence the constant reference throughout the trials of the Cenci, to "hoisting," "lowering" and "resettling the joints in place."—*Trans.*

CHAPTER VIII

AT LA PETRELLA

From the day Francesco Cenci came forth from prison, with the mark of infamy upon his brow and the unheard-of fine of 100,000 scudi levied upon his estate, the project of quitting Rome lay on his mind. But how leave the city without the permission of Clement VIII? And how was this to be obtained, before the payment of his vast fine? We have learned that he had said to Angelo di Pietro of Assergi, among others, that "he wished to get out of Rome." One can well imagine that later events strengthened him in that resolve. The suits for maintenance by his sons and his action against Giacomo for the attempted poisoning had been decided against him. New expenses and liabilities threatened to attenuate still further what had been so magnificent an estate but a short time since. Even Antonina's wedding, with the dowry of 20,000 scudi it entailed, had come at a bad moment. Woe betide him if the eighteen-year-old Beatrice must be married on such terms! Alas for that shameful trial which had struck him down a few months after he had remarried and was attempting, after his fashion, to reunite his family by calling its daughters home from their convent! Alas for the tragic death of Rocco, which proved, among other things, that not everything was permissible to the Cenci! The sum of these mischances brought him to a stage of ungovernable agitation. Yet they did not lead him to recognise his own faults and to look to their mending, as occurs in those spirits wherein some spark of conscience still glimmers. They plunged him rather into still greater rascalities, of which those who bore no blame for what was happening were the victims—Lucrezia, Beatrice and Bernardo (the last was soon after sent to school with Paolo). He kept the women confined in the house, as if to avenge him-

self upon those who were escaping from his roof and rearing their heads against him. It was at this very period that he beat Beatrice with a broomstick, that he pursued the thirteen-year-old Bernardo with threats, and so terrified the boy that he leaped from a corridor into the courtyard, where he was picked up stunned and bruised.

By a supreme effort he finished the payment of his fine. On March 24, 1595, he was free to go where he would. Giacomo and Cristoforo were then living separate from him at the Monte de' Cenci, Antonina and Lavinia were married, Bernardo and Paolo were "in school and lodging with a priest" near the Temple of Vesta already mentioned. Only Lucrezia and Beatrice remained; for economy's sake it suited him that Beatrice should not marry but should remain at home. His design was to betake himself to some spot, far from Rome, and outside the Papal States, yet near the border, so that he could easily return to Rome in case of need. Abruzzo, where he had so many financial interests, seemed suitable. True, he possessed the castles of Assergi, Pescomaggiore and Filetto; but they were all too far away and almost inaccessible in winter. Assergi, the most important of them, was actually on the Gran Sasso. He had also a house in Aquila, but it was small and already occupied by Giovan Paolo Massarelli, his business agent. Besides, Francesco did not wish to put "the ladies" in a city, rather to shut them up in some lonely stronghold.

He knew that Marzio Colonna possessed a perfectly habitable castle at La Petrella. La Petrella is a village almost on the Salto river, a little beyond Turano (the border-town between the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples), on the road which leads from Rieti to Avezzano. La Petrella is a pleasant enough spot, and its castle, rising as it does on a precipitous cliff, is quite apart from the village. The place seemed peculiarly adapted to his plans; he requested possession of it from Marzio Colonna, its lord and suzerain.

Marzio Colonna, son of Pompeo and Orinzia, daughter of Marzio Colonna of the "contea" of Marieri (she died in

1594), had borne since 1569 the title of Prince of Zagarolo, at which place he had inherited the church of San Lorenzo and a hospital, to which he had assigned a considerable income. In 1584, at the summons of Philip II, he had fitted out a great armada to invade England. But a terrible wreck brought his daring enterprise to nothing. He returned to Italy and entered the Papal Army with the rank of General of Infantry; this post he held at the time Cenci made his request. We may recall further that his wife was Giula di Sciarra Colonna, of the line of the Lords of Palestrina.

The departure of Francesco Cenci with his wife and daughter Beatrice from Rome for La Petrella took place in the first days of April 1595. In Lucrezia's own words, "My husband said to me that he wanted us to go for a little pleasure trip to his castles." With such a casual phrase was the trap concealed!

The route followed by the party was one taken by all who, at that period, journeyed from Rome to La Petrella. They left, on horseback, by the Porta Pia: they travelled along the via Nomentana to La Mentana; thence by way of Monte Libretti, Nerola and Monteleone, they came to Posticciola, a fief of Muzio Mareri, where the night was spent. Leaving early the next morning, they passed Stipes, Vallecupola and Poggio Vittiano, crossed the Salto, ascended a valley formed by a little torrent flowing into that river, and, about noon, arrived at La Petrella.

The entire journey was over rough mule-paths, save for the section of the via Nomentana Rome to Mentana and a stretch of the via Reatina from Nerola to the Fosso delle Mole, beneath Monteoleone: these were broad, ancient Roman highways. The road was a succession of steep ascents, of torrents and rivulets to be forded, of open levels and woodlands tangled with thorns and underbrush —yet through what superb mountain solitudes, what immense amphitheatres, ringed in with peaks and cloven by valleys! Nerola rises upon a summit which is thrust forward like a wooded peninsula across the line of the Corese rivulet. There is a baronial palace, a church with a little

La Petrella del Salto

steepled campanile, a group of houses which seem to be sheep dozing at noon-tide about their shepherd. Another magnificent and airy height succeeds—that of Monteleone, whose contour follows the broad valley of the Turano: it boasts in its vicinity the vast ruins of the Sabine Trebula Mutusca and the basilica of Santa Vittoria, whose tower is a treasury of ancient inscriptions. What marvels of art, history and nature are gathered here! Even so not all the country-folk are satisfied. They insist, in addition, that the martyrdom of Santa Vittorina occurred here, that here were born Lucius Mummius, conqueror of Corinth, and Martial—the Spaniard! Heights, hillocks and alluvial meadows follow in succession beneath the shadow of Monte Civitelle, until Posticciola is reached, built upon a cliff that overhangs the stream of Turano, resonant and crystal-clear beneath its poplar-shaded banks. This was once a frontier town between the Papal States and the Kingdom, its very name reminds us that here, at the border, posts were changed, and travellers lingered to rest or relay their teams. Poor houses huddle around a gloomy, ruinous castle, but all about are vineyards smiling in the sun. Crossing the ancient "mule-back" bridge, whose steep saddle is ribbed with stone footholds, the road ascends, first to Stipes, overlooking Rocca Sinibalda on the left and Ascrea to the right, thence to Imagine the highest point of the road (1226 metres above sea level): from here the descent is continuous until Vallecupola is reached, beneath Monte Aquilone. The wretched village lies at the foot of a shattered mediæval keep, a mere shell of ruin. The road continues to Poggio Vittiano, darkly and closely built upon a densely wooded promontory just above the Salto, and dominating almost all that portion of its valley called Cicoli or Cicolano.

Our travellers are nearly at the end of their journey: La Petrella is in sight. All that remains is to walk the stumbling horses down a precipitous path to the placid valley where the Salto mirrors the sky in its limpid sur-

face, to cross the river by a little wooden bridge, and to climb a short distance up the opposite slope.

Leaving the Church of San Rocco and the Capuchin monastery behind them, the party arrives at the eastern gate of La Petrella, with its fountain. Here the riders draw rein, their horses are watered, Francesco chats with the peasants: here, perhaps, he is greeted by Olimpio Calvetti, who is to be one of the leading characters in the tragedy to come, who, indeed, after Beatrice Cenci, will play its leading rôle.

The climb to the fortress, although within the village, is rough and rocky, but short.

Two luckless women, guiltless of offence, have reached their prison. In three and a half years they are to leave it with blood on their hands.

The names of the places described will often occur in this record, and it is time to learn something of the village and the fortress of La Petrella.

The village has not changed much since those days. The great palazzo, near the eastern gate, at first the home of the Novelli, now of the Mauri, was not constructed till later, in the seventeenth century; and where to-day the broad Provincial Road passes, there existed then only a lane along a wall which bordered the row of houses looking toward the valley of the Salto. Certainly other buildings have sprung up and others still have been modernised, but the general aspect or panorama of the village is little altered. In those days any one coming from Avezzano and journeying toward Rieti traversed the lower village by its principal street; this was almost level and was terminated to the east and the west by a gate and a fountain. The two gates were demolished not long ago to give easier access to the village; but the two fountains remain. At the beginning of this street we see the dark baronial edifice which belonged to the Colonna, as the heraldic device remaining on the keystone of the gateway reveals. Halfway up the street is the church of Santa Caterina. To the north is a dense tangle of buildings

giving way suddenly to an open space, where stands the collegiate church of Santa Maria. Nothing of this is changed to-day. The steep alleys of La Petrella, with their endless open intervals, sharp turns, ascents, cobbled footholds, stairways, archways, passages, and little squares, create a continuous contrast of light and shadow and are picturesque as of old. Here and there one catches, amid the bare stone exterior walls of the houses, some artistic pretension: an architrave adorned with festoons, flowers, animals, the work of a peasant artisan who, at the most mature period of Art, still did homage to Roman tradition. All at once, like a sudden upward thrust, a lyric outburst of Nature, that cruel and ominous peak on which the fortress was built to defend the humble little houses against any who might draw near with hostile intent, is seen soaring above their lowly roofs. The houses climb a little way up the flanks of the cliff, especially on the eastern side, where a lane, which took its start from the third gate of the village, once led up to the fortress itself.

On the opposite side the houses did not continue up so far; but among them a road began named "the mountain road" because it clambered up the high mountain standing behind La Petrella, after passing near the stronghold and running by a vineyard called the "castle vineyard." Thence, climbing ever upward, it came by the plain of Rascino to Aquila.

To return for a moment to the lower town. At the western gate began a path called "the Dark Way"; it descended into a valley as far as the settlement of Villa Marzia or Palombara. The western gate was the starting-point of a road which passed near San Rocco (a church and convent ruined in the earthquake of January 13, 1915) and dropped down to the Salto; this was the road to Rome.

This brief description, necessary because we shall have much to say of all these places and because in many cases some conception of the locality is of importance to an understanding of our history, is based partly upon three

unpublished views of La Petrella, useful although naïve and lacking in detail; dated 1656, 1672 and 1743: and a description of the seventeenth century. But our chief means of reconstruction has been patient and direct examination upon the spot.

From the end of the village, about halfway up the peak and immediately outside the upper gate, a path turned off to the left and led to the fortress. Here this fortress jutted out over a small level space, or piazza (where was a reservoir called "the castle pool") with two projecting sections or large towers with buttresses. These were connected by a wall set back from their façades and pierced by a doorway with folding wooden doors. This was called "the great door." Entering here, one found oneself in a small court on which opened a stable and some servants' rooms, one of them called "the oven room" because in the past it had been used as an oven.

The front building, of the same height as the two advanced towers, was entered by a second door sheathed with iron. Behind the door was a passage, also a narrow stairway, off which several passages opened and which gave access to three floors. On the first above the ground floor were servants' rooms; on the second a "galleria," or hall ornamented with paintings, called also "the painted room," various rooms adjoined it which extended into the forward towers, likewise called "painted rooms." In short, the top floor repeated the arrangement and the dimensions of the lower floors; it was called "the upper apartment." Such was the fortress on its southern side, facing the village.

Another important wing extended westward and looked toward Capradosso and the castle of Staffoli; its base was protected by a wall built on the brink of the cliff. This wall formed a rectangular court without any entrance, and was accessible only from above and by means of portable ladders. The court was partly filled with rubbish and filth, and was so overgrown with wild, dense vegetation that it was called "the wilderness," or, since it was the haunt of rabbits, "the warren." The wall of that

Graphic Reconstruction of Petrella Castle

wing which overlooked this wilderness had on its upper part a recessed course on which a balcony, or *mignano*, had been set, resting in part upon the recession itself and in part thrust forward into space. It was entirely of wood, floor, parapet and brackets, though a course of brick had been laid upon the floor to keep the boards from rotting. This balcony was reached through the door of one of the four or five rooms aligned along the wing. To the north lay a large terrace or open space called also the "piazza"; on one side it had a view of Staffoli, on another of the "Mountain," and on the third of il Colle and Mareri. A ring of battlements served as its parapet; several pieces of artillery stood here in defence of the stronghold on its least secure side, that is, where the cliff is least steep and high. On the fourth side, abutting on a keep more ancient than the rest, rose the main part of the building, containing a small chapel, several rooms and a kitchen on the level of the piazza; one entered these rooms from the piazza by means of three doors. A little staircase led from the kitchen to two small rooms; from these one mounted by other stairs to the west wing of the castle, the wing of the *mignano*, or balcony.

Finally, an enclosed courtyard, entered through a gate, occupied the centre of the fortress; it was called the "cloister." To the north of this was a cellar with a window on the battlemented terrace; to the west a cell which served as a prison; its window opened beneath the balcony and above the "wilderness." When the Cenci women came to the castle this window was walled up.

The reader should strive to bear in mind what we have attempted to describe with the utmost clarity at our command. An acquaintance with the topography of the fortress has the greatest importance for the comprehension of some phases of the great tragedy we are about to narrate.

Here we may allude to the utter falsity of the tale that immediately after the death of Francesco Cenci the castle was abandoned as accursed and that none dwelt there any more, so that it soon fell to ruin. Not only

was it standing entire in the middle of the seventeenth century, but Pompeo Colonna fortified it and provisioned it anew. This action brought about his imprisonment in the Castel Sant' Elmo in Naples, his stocking of the castle having aroused suspicions in the heart of the Viceroy. He was finally set free by the Viceroy, but punished by the sequestration of all his property in the Kingdom. The drawings of La Petrella made in 1656 and 1672 testify to the good condition of the fortress, as does a passage in the description of La Petrella, already cited, of the same century. In the "stronghold erected upon a high and very strong peak . . . the lord has . . . a dwelling of much comfort, considering the situation; some good mortars and musketoons are there. A castellan, with ample stores, keeps continual guard there, and there are also secure prisons, to which are brought for the most part those who are gaoled for serious matters."

From this time dilapidation slowly set in: a little later we read, "On the little summit called *La Rocca* is the residence of the Baronial Court; on the ground level is a hall round about six chambers, roofed; under them are the kitchen, detention room, civil and criminal prisons; above this group of rooms is another section with a hall and two other rooms; and round about are other remains of the buildings, now crumbling; and on the Piazza is the Chapel covered with a roof, its altar has no image, and there is a ruined fountain in the Piazza."[1] The drawing of 1743 shows the two forward towers lower and in ruin; the high walls behind are cracked, trees and underbrush bristle everywhere. To-day nothing remains but a miserable remnant of a tower, with formless heaps of stone and plaster fallen from the old walls, cropping out among tufts of broom. Some of the ruin is recent. Twenty years ago the floor of a room to the west caved in; on January 13, 1915, a section of wall rising above the village swayed in the earthquake and collapsed in-

[1] Carlo Tito Dalboni: *Storia de Beatrice Cenci e de' suoi tempi*, Naples, 1864, p. 502.

ward upon the ground level of the fortress, thus saving the houses below, already shaken and damaged, from a greater disaster.

Francesco Cenci was awaited at La Petrella by Olimpio Calvetti, castellan or seneschal of the castle, in the service of Marzio Colonna. This man, his wife, Plautilla, and her mother, Giovanna, who lived with them, conducted Francesco, Lucrezia and Beatrice to their apartments, the richest of those called the "painted rooms." Olimpio and his family lived on the top floor.

It is now time to deal with this new character. By good fortune the researches which justice undertook concerning this Olimpio, before and after his death, have preserved for us a precious mass of information in regard to his appearance, manners and costume. This information is of some service. It helps to elucidate, to explain, a fact of capital interest, and disposes of certain false portrayals by fiction mongers which have made of him an old, ugly, savage and sinister gaoler of the Cenci women.

According to the harmonious testimony of twenty witnesses, Olimpio was a very handsome man, tall of stature, "rather stout than lean," but "well built" and "well proportioned." Some deponents spoke of him with enthusiasm. One called him "a fine figure of a man"; another, "a big man, of fine appearance"; a third, "a man truly of fine appearance," who, when on horseback, "seemed to be a picture, he looked so fine." His complexion was brown, his eyes black; beard, mustachios and hair were also black, but with some "sort of chestnut" shade in them; his hair was a little sparse and grizzled over the brow. His head, a trifle large, rested on a strong neck; his face, hale and smooth, made him seem younger than his age.

In fact, Giacomo di Giovanni, coachman in the establishment of Giacomo Cenci, who met Olimpio about the middle of 1598, said he was between thirty-five and forty, whereas Michele, called the Spaniard, and Ottavio of

Piediluco, who saw him on May 18, 1599, in their village, put him down as between thirty and forty. "He might be getting toward his fortieth year," said the second. Those who stripped and searched the decapitated body on the day after the murder, judged it the body of a "man of about 30 or 35 years" from the healthy freshness of the flesh.

The truth is that Olimpio Calvetti was about forty-five when Francesco, with Lucrezia and Beatrice, arrived at La Petrella; he was a little under fifty when he was killed.[1] Thus he was in effect still a young man, as well as handsome and vigorous.

It should be added that when still a boy he had been taken from the shop of a certain maestro Antonio at the Santi Apostoli near the Colonna palace, and, perhaps because he came from Zagarolo, a fief of the family, placed in the service of Marc' Antonio Colonna as groom and man-at-arms. Association with so noble a lord had given him some distinction of manner. Indeed, when he came to Rome from La Petrella, not only did he frequent the Colonna palace, but he carried a sword in the city, rode an excellent mount, and even went so far as to play at "*pallamaglio*"[2] on the Aventine, in the fields between Santa Sabina and Santa Prisca, with young nobles such as Paolo and Bernardo Cenci themselves. The serving-women of La Petrella called him "il Signor Olimpio"; Giacomo, the coachman already mentioned, said: "He is a fine-looking man and a soldier"; and Stefano Constatello, a fisherman of Piediluco, recounted that when his dreadful end was learned there many a one exclaimed: "What a pity! He was a handsome man and so fine-looking!"

Olimpio made a point of dressing decently, even with a certain ceremony, although he could not procure fine fabrics, extremely costly in those days. He was aided in this

[1] Orazio Pomella made him five years older, by confusing all the dates. By means of some mental arithmetic he said that he had known Olimpio as a tailor's apprentice in 1577 or 1578, whereas at that time Olimpio was with the Colonna. How could he have been a tailor's apprentice at twenty-eight?

[2] Tennis or pall-mall.—*Trans.*

La Petrella in 1743

particular through having worked as a boy in a tailor-shop in Rome. That he set store by dress we know on the testimony of his brother Pietro. And we shall see how he was dressed at the time of his death. A few months before the coachman, Giacomo, described him as clad "in a cloak which had the colour of a dark mixture, with a doublet and hose in the Sevillian style [1] if I remember aright, and a black cap with a cordon, it seems to me." Pomella testified, "He was ordinarily clad in mixed hose of half wool, with a dark great-coat and a jerkin and a pair of gaiters and shoes."

A man of mettle, he had borne himself with valour in war and with resolution in his personal disputes. His brother Pietro said of him, rather naïvely: "He did tailoring as a boy; then he went to the war in the naval armada of Pius V, and then he went to the Portuguese war, and then he was with Signor Prospero and Signor Marzio Colonna." Now the "war of the naval armada of Pius V" as every one knows, was the war that came to an end with the battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571; and "the Portuguese war" was concluded by the occupation of that country by Philip II of Spain, in 1580.

Orazio Pomella, the tailor of the Cenci, who plays a notable rôle in this history, noted that Olimpio lacked several teeth and that he had "a mark on the crown of his head like a moon" (like a half moon, said Olimpio's brother, Pietro Calvetti). He adds that it was the scar of a wound dealt him by the Turks "on the day of the great battle, with a scimitar." Olimpio himself had told him so; but it was an idle boast. Olimpio's brother Pietro affirmed that the scar had come from "a blow with a pole in front of San Marcello."

At any rate he had fought in the wars of 1571 and 1580, and had returned from them with a disposition naturally violent, head-strong and bloody, intensified. He was a "haughty man, a man of the devil," said Marzio Cata-

[1] The manuscript reads, "in the Venetian style"; but as will be seen, this is to be corrected to "Sevillian style," the fashion in hose most in vogue at the time.

lano (whom we are soon to meet). Giacomo Cenci supported the statement, adding "that he had slain a constable here in Rome" and a tavern-keeper at Macel de' Corvi. This was true. In the time of Gregory XIII (toward the end of his pontificate—perhaps in 1585) Olimpio slew a Captain Zucchi, constable of the Campagna. The killing took place at the Arco di Camigliano,[1] which stood where the via Piè di Marmo opens upon the Piazza of the Collegio Romano; this archway afforded ingress to the Serapeo. Olimpio was taken and put in the prisons of the Castel Sant' Angelo; but later (almost certainly through the influence of the Colonnas) he was absolved by the Pope and "went away to Avignon."

When he returned he was sent out of the city by Marzio Colonna and made castellan of his castle of La Petrella. His duties were to take care of the fortress, supervise the neighbouring estates of the Colonnas, and make "silk for Signora Giulia." He occasionally came to Rome on business and would lodge at the Colonna palace at the Santi Apostoli. It was while on one of these journeys, in 1590, that he got into a brawl with a certain Angelo of Ascoli, host of a tavern at Macel de' Corvi, and killed him. This time he again took to flight, still under the protection of the Colonnas, and returned to La Petrella, which was beyond the Papal jurisdiction. Here it seemed he would be obliged to remain for good, having been condemned "to pain of death" by the Governor of Rome. Apparently renouncing all idea of a return to Rome, he took to wife Plautilla Gasperini, niece of a local apothecary; this occurred in the same year, 1590.[2] We shall see that he returned to Rome of his own volition, and in what manner he obtained a remission of his sentence. For the present we must not depart from the chronological order of our

[1] The spot is definitely named by Orazio Pomella; as he was a friend of Olimpio and dwelt in Rome, his indications are to be preferred to those of Narcisco d'Arrone, who dwelt in Piediluco and who spoke by hearsay. The latter testified that the killing took place in the Banchi.

[2] Plautilla, in her testimony already cited, stated that she had lived nine years in the castle of La Petrella, "ever since I took Olimpio to husband."

Ruins of the Fortress of La Petrella in 1915
(Destroyed by an earthquake)

tale: we are still at the moment of the arrival of Francesco Cenci and "his ladies" at La Petrella. At that period Olimpio and Plautilla had two children, a four-year-old girl, Vittoria, the apple of her father's eye, and a younger son named Prospero.

By some it has been said that Francesco barely remained ten days after bringing the ladies to their new home at La Petrella before returning with his coachman, Giovanni Baldo. It has even been said that he returned in the hope of being present at the coronation in the Capitol of Torquato Tasso, and that when this failed to take place (the poet died April 25th, 1695), he made the return trip to La Petrella "with intent to relax his mind in pleasant journeys and pastimes." [1] As a matter of fact no documentary evidence exists that Francesco remained only ten days nor that he returned to Rome with Giovanni Baldo. What does appear is that all this happened, as we shall soon see, in April of the following year. Nor is the hypothesis that he returned to Rome for the coronation of Tasso any sounder. No day was ever fixed for this: it remained to the end a mere project in which the sick poet no longer took any interest. And what is to be said of the "relaxations and pastimes" attributed to this sinister soul. His relaxations and amusements were still to take the shape of lurid passion, unsobered by the stake he had barely escaped or the heavy fine he had been forced to pay.

Did it not rather occur to him that his departure from the Papal States to a remote spot would afford an excellent opportunity for abandoning himself with impunity to fresh villainies?

It is this theory at least that events were soon to justify.[2]

[1] Spezi, N. *Storia de' Cenci,* MS. pp. 55-56; on his authority, Rinieri, pp. 140-141.

[2] Fabrizio Burio and Cesare Santoni, testifying in August, 1599, say vaguely that the matter occurred about three years before; but Lucrezia defines it with precision, "That was the first year we had gone to La Petrella." Girolama da Capranica confirms the statement, asserting that while she was at La Petrella, or from April, 1596, to December 26, 1597, Curzio, son of Lucrezia, did not come there, but

Francesco had already proposed to his stepson, Curzio, born of Lucrezia's first marriage with Felice Velli, and a page in the household of Marchese Gavotti, that he should accompany the ladies and himself to La Petrella. The lad, then hardly more than fifteen, at first refused. Once at La Petrella, Francesco knew no rest until he had renewed his invitation and sent the boy a horse upon which to make the journey to the castle. Curzio's desire to see his mother again, to see La Petrella, to make a pleasant trip in spring-time over the mountains, overcame his reluctance. Upon his arrival Francesco lost no time in throwing off his mask and in attempting to subject the lad to his passions. Violent scenes ensued, with the boy and with Lucrezia, of which ample testimony remains. Curzio insisted on returning to Rome. Francesco, probably to prevent this, refused him a horse and forbade him to speak to his mother again. She quickly learned what had happened, and, though a weak timorous creature, this time dared to raise her voice against her husband, and in favour of her son. Francesco, who was about to set out on a journey and was holding one of his spurs in his hand, struck her with it in the face, drawing blood and leaving a scar. He then took a wooden billet and beat her until she fell. As she rose to her feet, he struck her down a second time. "He did not want me to speak to my son [it is Lucrezia telling her own story] and was sending him away on foot. I wanted to speak to Curzio and to tell him to hire a horse below in La Petrella: and when I had bidden my son God-speed, for he had been sent away from us, and Francesco had had the horses saddled for a ride, then Francesco returned to me, saying: 'Why did you speak to Curzio? What did you say to him?' And I answered him: 'I told him to order a horse in La Petrella and to pay for it when he got to Rome.' And Francesco, without a word more, made at me and struck me with a log and caused me to fall to earth." As Beatrice tells the story: "Lucrezia was wounded with a riding-spur, be-

on the contrary she heard Olimpio and Plautilla say that it had happened before.

cause my father wished to go forth, and he uttered some shameful thing, and with that spur which he had in his hand, he marked her."

Curzio's companions and friends in Trastevere, where he lived, besieged him to know "why he had returned so soon from La Petrella." These included Fabrizio Burio, of Rome, thirty years old; Cesare Santoni, of Rignano, forty (these two were both land-holders), Riterio Velli, Curzio's cousin, and Ottavio Tignosino, his brother-in-law. He answered them without mincing his words that "his step-father had attempted sodomy"; and that, for that reason, "he had run away."

Not long afterwards Francesco decided to visit Rome. He left "the ladies" at La Petrella "at liberty," in other words they were free to wander where they would over the rock on which it was built. He took with him as his body-servant upon the journey, not Giovanni Baldo, as some have said, but Marzio di Floriano Catalano, of La Petrella, who will become one of the most important figures in this history.

On his arrival at Rome, Francesco took lodgings at the Hospital of San Giacomo degli Incurabili. He had his own domestics, but, fearful as usual of being poisoned, did not trust them nor the hospital servants; as once before in the past, he had his meals cooked by the wife of his notary, Domenico Stella. Giacomo, having met him by chance, raised his cap; his father did not return the salute. The reader may think it natural that this should have happened after all that had taken place between father and son; he may think it needless for us to have reproduced such a detail. Such is not the case; in the noble families of those days (and to some degree in those of to-day) the fiercest quarrels, leading often to civil suits and sometimes to bloodshed, did not interrupt formal relations and rigid ceremonial.

Restricting ourselves to our own subject, we may recall how outrageous Giacomo's espousal of Lodovica Velli without asking his father's consent appeared to Francesco. Lodovica herself told the judge who had come to

examine her in her home, "Signor Francesco has never been with us, nor lived with us, nor lived in common with us. . . . It is indeed true that Signor Francesco used to come here to see me, and he used to dine here also, but that was before he took a second wife (November 27, 1593), and again afterwards, before he went to prison (March 4, 1594), but after he went to prison he never came again." A large number of witnesses proved that outward relations between father and sons continued, even when the suits against Francesco and against Giacomo had mounted to a fury of reciprocal accusations. Again in February 1595 Antonio Sangallo declared, "I have sometimes heard Signor Giacomo discussing with his father, also his brothers with their father, about a settlement of the matter of the living allowances." Also Francesco Scotusio: "While they have differed in opinion, Signor Giacomo has honoured and revered his father as sons do." Better still said Angelo d'Assergi, "I can say that Signor Francesco and Signor Giacomo treated one another as father and son, as far as one may know *by their words and from their lips, as for their hearts I know not.*"

The complete rupture occurred either at the resumption of the action against Giacomo, or when Francesco had lodged his second complaint against him (January 16, 1595). "A good three years have gone by," asserted Giacomo in January 1599, "since my father has spoken to me or I to him." As we have seen, Giacomo attempted to salute his father, who had just returned from La Petrella; but thenceforth every bond, even to the usages of outward courtesy, was ruptured.

CHAPTER IX

THE IMPRISONMENT OF BEATRICE AND LUCREZIA

It has been asserted that Francesco travelled from La Petrella to Rome in April 1595 and almost immediately afterwards made the return journey. On the contrary, although he remained in his castle longer than is generally believed, he did not return again to La Petrella after his journey to Rome until Holy Week of 1596; the exact date was April 10th. The coachman, Giovanni Baldo, who had re-entered the service of Cenci at San Giacomo degli Incurabili to replace Marzio Catalano,[1] said they had already arrived on Good Friday of 1596 (April 13th). He remembered the date because of the surprise he had received when, on that solemn day, his master had thrown his wife on a bed and forced her, without paying the least attention to the presence of Beatrice, who had then gone out of the room and shut the door. We have only the belated testimony of Baldo to this fact; while it cannot surprise any one who knows Francesco Cenci as we do, it serves as a sufficient indication of the day when Baldo and his master were at La Petrella.

We now come to an important and unexpected change of scene. Francesco moves from the lower room to the one inhabited up to that time by Olimpio; he there confines the two women in rigorous seclusion. Olimpio, with his family, passes to the lower floor, or the "painted rooms."

What prompted Francesco to take these harsh measures against the two poor women?

There were two reasons, we think; first, their constant insistence that he should take them back to Rome, and

1 "I did not go to La Petrella at the beginning when he went there. I went there with Signor Francesco at the time when Signor Francesco was staying at San Giacomo's. I made the trip there with him in Holy Week."—*Testimony of Baldo.*

hence his fear that some day they would escape; second, the too great liberty with which they might deal, not with Olimpio merely, but with all the men who came and went in the fortress. Let us not forget the usage of the day, of keeping women under guard, nor the blind, cruel jealousy of Francesco. We have already heard the testimony of certain servants that in Rome only Sergetto was allowed to enter the apartment of the ladies, because he was a boy. Likewise at La Petrella Francesco entrusted them to Santi de Pompa because Santi was an old man. His assignment to them of the upper floor and his transfer of Olimpio to that beneath removed from this latter—and from his visitors—any occasion to pass to and fro before the door of Lucrezia's and Beatrice's quarters, as had previously been the case. To attain his purpose he further ordered that any who might bring provisions should not deliver them directly to the ladies, but only to Santi de Pompa. As a last stroke he took from Lucrezia's finger a large ring "with a flat diamond," which he had given her as a wedding present, to punish her for her vain opposition to his tyranny. The last fact we have on her own statement; she offered testimony from Santi de Pompa and another servant, "Alessandro alias Cipolletta," in corroboration.

Certain witnesses deposed simply that Francesco "made fast the windows and the doors," and that the ladies were placed in confinement; but Plautilla Calvetti went into greater detail, "He had little vents put over the windows, and he had the windows closed in such a way that one could not lean out there, and he had the entrance-door of the rooms locked, and he had a wicket made in the door where Santi put in the food; and to this wicket there was a keyhole, and in this keyhole was a key, and it was kept locked from outside by Santi, and at night he locked this wicket with a key." These words, with others which we shall reproduce, give full credibility to what Beatrice deposed on February 12, 1599, "When our father was away for about two years [1] and went to Rome, besides leaving

[1] For a clear understanding of the story it must be stated here that Francesco Cenci went to La Petrella three times; the first time at

Santi de Pompa, he also closed the windows of the hall and of the chambers, and he had us put in a room nailed up by certain joiners, and then he had a cutting made above these windows, that is, in the frame of these windows, and he had a lantern-window made so that we might have light, and he left matters thus. We could approach and look out of the windows thus left open, but we had to stand on a chair or a stool. . . . We had our food and drink through the door at the hand of this Santi."

After the completion of this fine task, and only ten days from his arrival at La Petrella, Francesco again took the road to Rome, with Baldo and Marzio Catalano. He left the two wretched women behind, to drag out an appalling existence in the lowest depths of despair.

Since no woman of La Petrella would have been willing to shut herself up voluntarily in those rooms with their barred windows and doors, and since he would not have men there, Francesco, on arriving in Rome, sought for two. He found and dispatched them, again having recourse to deception.

At the "Servants' Agency in Sant' Agostino" he saw one Calidonia Lorenzini, of Siena; her he induced by lavish promises to remove to La Petrella. She went there accompanied by Marzio Catalano. Girolama, widow of Antonio of Capranica, tells us a tale full of highly coloured detail. She was a woman of about fifty; to judge from her deposition and from certain facts which we shall learn, her vivacity must have been almost diabolical. "There is something I just want to say," she said to the judge, "and put this down too. I was engaged in Rome

the beginning of April 1595; he returned to Rome more than a month later; the second time he went in April 1596, returning ten days later; the third time in December 1597, not returning at all, for he was killed and buried there. Lucrezia says that he went twice from La Petrella to Rome; and Plautilla, wife of the castellan, living in the castle with her husband, says the same thing. Plautilla's reckonings are always precise; she said that Francesco moved from one apartment to the other a year after his first coming to La Petrella; this in fact took place in April 1596; she said that he remained absent a little over twenty months; and in fact he returned to La Petrella December 13, 1597, or about twenty-one months later.

by this quondam Signor Francesco Cenci, who hired me as a waiting-woman to these, his ladies aforementioned, by mediation of a certain Madonna Giromina, who is dead; she kept a school opposite the Cappuccini;[1] and she told me that these ladies were at La Petrella, in the place of Sig. Marzio Colonna, and that there were gardens and fountains there, and that there was nothing to do there but amuse oneself, and that I would not be out of Rome more than four months, for he had arranged the marriage of his daughter, and then we would all return to Rome together, and that it would be the making of my fortune, and he made other great offers, saying that I would get gifts which would amount to more than my pay, and so I accepted, and the Signore sent me to La Petrella with a servant of his who found me a mount, and on the way the first gain I had was that I broke a leg; and when I arrived there I found the ladies locked in with four keys, and the windows barred and nailed up with certain lantern-windows overhead, and the key was kept by a certain Santi de Pompa, and when I went in this Santi opened the door to me, but afterwards I had to stay locked up as the ladies were, and there I lost ten years of my life in the year and a half I was there." Here Girolama pauses for breath (in fact the notary indicates a pause), and then begins again more excitedly than before. "I came to have not a rag to cover my shame, so I wrote to say to Signor Francesco that he should send me a dress which I had here in Rome in a box in the house of a friend of mine who lived under Montecavallo, and I had him sent a cloth with a border and two pieces of serge, for him to put them in that box there and send me that dress, and Signor Francesco would not send me anything, rather he sent to tell me by a letter he wrote to a certain Olimpio who was the castellan, that he should put me in the stocks (and he wrote that also about another lady who was a kitchen-maid named Calidonia) if we made any complaint about anything, and this Signore sent to tell me also that he wanted to have that box of mine sent to

[1] To-day Santa Croce and San Bonaventura dei Lucchesi.

him, but I would not do it because they told me that I would never again see anything of it if it fell into his hands, and afterward that box which was full of things was stolen from me, while I was in his service at La Petrella and he was still in Rome, and I have suspected that that man had it stolen, because he knew where it was, for I had told him of it, and the things which were in that box were worth more than thirty scudi." She concluded, "And that is all the gain I have had from Signor Francesco for having served him."

The young Calidonia was no less emphatic than the old Girolama; but she was as petulant and tearful as the other was vivacious. Her complaints never ended; so that once Olimpio, at his wit's end, in order to frighten her and stop her tongue, told her of a certain order of Francesco's, and made a feint of throwing her from the castle walls. But let her tell her own story, "I want to tell you of a great cruelty that Signor Francesco had the keeper of the castle, Olimpio Calvetti, inflict upon me, for I, having told Signor Olimpio that I should get some money, this Signor Francesco refused always to send me any; nay—Olimpio told him that I was half naked and that he felt shame to see me, and he told him further that when he brought the food, for Olimpio was the steward, and when he gave it to me as the servant, he would shield his eyes so as not to see me, so naked was I, and he told all this to Signor Francesco here in Rome, and how I was lamenting night and day, and weeping; and Signor Francesco answered him this, 'Do you know what you want to do when she complains? Just take her and throw her off the wall, from the battlements of the fort.' And this fine fellow Olimpio, one morning when I was busy roasting a kid for the ladies—Signor Francesco was not there, but I was just bewailing the evil treatment that Signor Francesco did me, making me go naked, then Olimpio told me all this that I have said, that Signor Francesco had told him and given him leave and license that next time I complained he should throw me off the battlements; and it was that very morning, he took me and dragged me toward those battle-

ments and he tried to throw me over, and in dragging me along he tore and scratched all my face, and if it had not been for Plautilla, his wife, and Santi de Pompa, who urged him not to do it, Olimpio would have thrown me over without more ado, and this was only because I was lamenting the evil treatment that Signor Francesco did me in making me go naked."

But our concern is not so much with the droll complaints of Girolama and the importunity of her companion Calidonia as with the two Cenci women. It is impossible to picture to ourselves the infinite monotony of their rigorous and undeserved imprisonment—the long hours, days and months passed in rooms lighted only by such feeble rays as stole in through a few small apertures, without realising how their misery inevitably turned to a deep and profound hatred of the domestic tyrant. Nothing perverts the conscience so effectually as long continued injustice.

Lavinia and Antonina, the former Francesco's natural daughter, were happy brides: the sons, in bitter litigation with their father, were at Rome, meeting companions of their own station in life, living in spacious palaces, taking part in religious and civil pomps and ceremonies, mingling with the colourful riot of the joyous and turbulent carnival. It was from the very Piazza Giudea, within a stone's throw of the ancient Cenci palace, that the Jews, stripped of their garments, were driven forth year by year in the Corsa del Pallio.[1] What an uproar on the Corso! What showers of eggs filled with water, of turnips, apples, rotten oranges, dead cats and filth from windows along the route! A barbarous—a horrible—business! Yet one which so delighted the coarse populace that proclamations forbidding it under pain of fine, imprisonment and flogging availed nothing. And then, the masquerades! The floats, the horses curvetting beneath spirited young riders, the tiltings and journeys by cava-

[1] See Michel de Montaigne, *Journal d'un Voyage en Italie*, edited by Aless. d'Ancona (Citta di Castello, 1895), p. 249. This edition contains ample and curious notes.

liers and amazons as well, the procession of gay coaches filled with ladies in rich attire![1] Rich attire! While Lucrezia and Beatrice were seeing their clothes fall to rags, the soles and heels part from their shoes, forced even to send back the old ones as proof they could not be worn a day longer before Francesco would send new.

And the popular amusements of the carnival! Donkey races, cock-fights, tilts where buckets filled with water overturned on the clumsy rider who missed the ring. Every year some novelty to be observed. "It was in the year 1595 that carriages first appeared in Rome, taking the place of open coaches, that felt hats were worn instead of cloth and velvet caps or hats made of sarsenet."[2]

Every thought—every memory—in the minds of these two women must have turned to bitter regret or awakened some project for justified rebellion. They were not even mother and daughter; and the solace that grief finds from an affection profoundly and perfectly shared was denied them. Lucrezia was not a bad woman: but her nature was weak and sluggish, she had neither will, nor intelligence, nor character. Even though she did not, with Beatrice, awaken that instinctive antagonism which stepmothers so often arouse, her companionship must have been an additional torture to a nature so restless and energetic. Boredom—ineffable and complete, the ceaseless canker at the heart, the slow growth of one subconscious yet fixed idea—vengeance against the man who was no longer husband and father, but tyrant and slave-driver.

Driven desperate, Beatrice one day dared to rebel against her gaoler, and Lucrezia joined her in mutiny.

Santi de Pompa had opened the door wherein was the wicket in order to introduce "the supply of wood"; the two women had stationed themselves close to it; they sprang out, "and said to this Santi, [according to Plautilla's tale] 'You stay in there!' and they said that they would not stay shut up." The old servant, to escape pun-

1 Michel de Montaigne, *Journal d'un Voyage en Italie.*

2 Ant. Valena, *Cose notabili occorse in Roma,* mss., in the Archivio communale of Rome.

ishment from his master, begged them to re-enter; but as a price of their obedience he was obliged to promise that during Cenci's absence he would often permit them to stroll about the fort and the open battlemented terrace by day, while he would lock them up again by night. In fact Beatrice states, "Signora Lucrezia and I would go forth from our rooms; Santi would open them while our father was absent and we would go to the garden which is within the fortress." She explained, "It is not a garden, but it is an open terrace and this Santi was present, and this happened by day. The rooms where Olimpio and Plautilla, his wife, lived were some distance from this piazza. The rooms where Santi lived were in the piazza of the fort." No one could enter the castle without being seen by Santi. Girolama also deposed, "It is the truth that while we were at La Petrella, or for as long as I was there, we women had four rooms which were locked and Santi de Pompa kept the key; it is indeed true that he let us out at times and let us go about the castle." "At times," said Lucrezia also, "he took compassion on us and opened the door of the hall for us and we went to the head of the stair to take a little air, for otherwise we would have been dead there." Calidonia confirmed that the rooms inhabited by the ladies were four in number and that Santi de Pompa kept the key; "but he still opened for us and we could go about through the whole castle; and when Santi heard any knocking at the gate, he himself would lock us up again."

It was at this time that the ladies met Pietro Calvetti, friar in the Monastery of Santa Maria della Minerva in Rome, who had journeyed to La Petrella to meet his brother, Olimpio.

Of one thing there was no stint, so Calidonia and Girolama agree; food was plentiful. As we have seen, this was a matter under the supervision of Olimpio. The first said, "We did not suffer for food; indeed it is true that sometimes it became stale because it could not be consumed." The second corroborated this statement; "We had enough to eat and drink, but sometimes there

was a scarcity because it was not in the market, and once we had to fry dry macaroni, which was in the fort, in a skillet with oil, to use for bread." But there was no real ground for complaint here; in fact, it was a great grievance to Calidonia that she found none, also that she could make no complaint of her treatment at the hands of the ladies.

In their apartment the Cenci women and the two servants had arranged things in this manner: the bedroom where Olimpio and Plautilla had once slept now served the same purpose for the ladies; in the adjoining room were the beds of the two servants; the other two rooms were used by day and contained the wardrobes and the chests for clothing, laundry and furnishings.

Francesco Cenci, in Rome, was dwelling in the Hospital of San Giacomo degli Incurabili; in order to secure attention there he was in the habit of repeating that he "did not mean to leave anything to his sons, nor to the sons of his sons," but would leave everything to the Hospital. Cesare Cenci sneeringly remarked that Francesco promised this when he was at San Giacomo's, and that he did the same thing for other church foundations, "and sometimes he would say that he wanted to make the Rota his heir, and sometimes a third organisation and sometimes a fourth, according as his convenience prompted."

Meanwhile he had by no means renounced his plan of obtaining a place still more remote than La Petrella, where he could escape from old and new suits with his sons and with creditors of every sort. To pay the judgments obtained against him he planned to alienate estates and property; his sons opposed the sale of such property, claiming it as held in tail. These matters were the subject of a maze of summonses, of edicts, mandates, judgments and attachments; to disentangle them it would be necessary to institute a college of archivists, lawyers and accountants, who would extract from them finally many volumes of legal discussions, calculations and catalogues of houses and lands.

At the time Francesco was seeking such a distant spot

he learned that Cardinal Montalto and his relatives of the Peretti family were not ill disposed to sell the fief of Incisa, in Monferrato, on the Belbo river. Since the lords of Montferrato at the time were the Gonzagas of Mantua, he was obliged to treat, not only with the sellers, but also with the Mantuan Court. This he accomplished through the medium of Gaspare Garzorio, the Mantuan agent resident in Rome. Francesco Cenci wrote to this person, June 20, 1596, "Some day I shall escape my ill fortune, and I hope that, by changing my country, I shall also escape my evil star. And the more do I hope that this will be true since I have made choice for my lord and master of a Prince so just and richly endowed and affectionate toward all his subjects that not only does he treat them with all good and upright justice, but bears them love as to his own brothers."

The contract with the Peretti had already been made. Cenci therefore begged the resident Mantuan agent to solicit for him from Mantua approval to his becoming lord of a "new fief," which he would be able to leave to whomsoever he would, without falling into contests, as in the case of the Roman estates, with all their restrictions. He adjures the recipient not to speak of the matter "with any person on earth," and requests that the replies be not even sent to him directly; he will send and get them in case of need. A month later he thanks the Duke for having "accepted him as his subject and vassal," for confirming the "privileges, titles, and dignities" already conceded to Peretti "of the marquisate of Incisa" and for having also confirmed his right to leave the property to any person he might designate "even though he be a foreigner." [1]

Though the affair appeared concluded, it was still in suspense. More than a year later (July 26, 1597) Garzorio wrote from Rome to Monsignor Petrozani, counsellor

[1] On account of all the courteous phrases of these letters—they were common to the sorriest figures of that day—Bertolotti has the temerity to write, "It was the letter of a gentleman, as in truth he was!" (p. 346).

of the Duke, "The conclusion has been delayed so long because this Cenci settled his business with our lord only a few days ago: since then a suit with his sons has supervened, and as soon as this is brought to an end, our business will be settled . . . if the suit ends in favour of Signor Cenci as seems likely . . . otherwise I think not."

Meanwhile other proposals for the marquisate of Incisa were put forward, and Garzorio sent this information: "I must not fail to tell you in confidence, seeing so much delay has arisen in the conclusion of the business, that the Signor Cardinal (Montalto) has been approached with regard to the purchase of the marquisate by certain gentlemen of Genoa."

Francesco's project was upset by the very suits from which he wished to flee; because of them he was forced to remain confined in San Giacomo, which had the privilege of conferring immunity from arrest.

To return to September 6, 1596, we find that on that day, "when they tried to attach his carriages and horses, he obtained a *non gravetur* of fifteen days," which permitted him to go freely about Rome to see to the sale of some property.[1]

The first thing he seems to have done was to betake himself to his old haunts. On September 8th, or two days after having obtained his first *non gravetur*, we find him already arrested, together with one Gerardo, a shoemaker, and his wife, Marzia. The document does not state the reason, but the case is perhaps the same as the one to which Giacomo and the Catalano allude; the former said that his father was in the prisons of the Borgo,[2] and the Catalano, who had returned to Francesco's service shortly

1 The text reads: non gravetur, nec molestetur personaliter, neque currus, neque equi Francisci Cincii. Die 6 sept. 1596. Servetur per dies 15.

2 These prisons commonly served "in cases which happened in the Borgo," but when the other prisons were full, they also served for "cases from across the river." As is well known, the prisons of Rome were six in number: Corte Savella, Tordinona, Campidoglio (the Capitol, Castel Sant' Angelo, Borgo and the Inquisition or the Holy Office.

before, confirmed that he "was put in prison for being found in the house of a woman friend of his at San Marco." That imprisonment, however, only lasted a few days.[1]

Two weeks after his first *non gravetur* he obtained a second, then, at intervals, six more; but, far from extricating himself from the toils of his desperate affairs, he became more and more entangled; his wrath against his sons rising higher with every failure to escape.

Marzio Catalano returned to his native village toward the summer of 1597; while there he spent some time in the castle service.[2] Later he went back to his various trades: mended kettles, worked in the fields, and in the evening gaily played the guitar and the lute in the little squares and lanes of La Petrella. We possess another bit of information upon him. When he left Rome, he bought a mare from Cenci for twelve scudi, but paid actually only eleven. The reader must not regard this as an idle detail. He will see in good time the reason we have reproduced this fact. In the words of Marzio himself, "I bought a roan mare from him (Francesco) here in Rome, at the time when I was in his service, for so have I been; and I bought it for the price of twelve scudi, of which I still had about one scudo to give him, which he had let me owe him."

During 1597 Francesco's life hardly varied from that of the previous year. He was still in San Giacomo, harried by his creditors. On February 11th he gave his natural daughter, Lavinia, wife of Morea, a coach with the horses and complete fittings, "for the affection which he bore her," says the document; the thought was probably

[1] April 9, 1596, we find a Francesco Cenci incarcerated for having threatened a man with a sword and having beaten him; but he cannot be identified with the subject of our history. In fact the document refers to him as *perusinus* (of Perugia). That there was at the time a Perugian family of Cenci in Rome is further proven by the record of a marriage of an M. Bernardinus Cencius *doctor perusinus*.

[2] Lucrezia and Beatrice, at the trial, mention the services performed at La Petrella by Marzio on his return from Rome.

in his mind that between one *non gravetur* and another he might wake up to find everything attached; and the idea of bidding farewell to Rome for good as soon as consent could be obtained took deeper root. He was busy with vast business projects devised by lawyers and notaries to remedy the constant dilapidation of his patrimony, always under attack by his heirs and the creditors; as well as distracted by petty business affairs. In March he rented a part of his palazzo at La Dogana,[1] in April he installed a new rector, the Reverend Gaspare Liccio of Palermo, in San Tommaso *in Capite Molarum* at the Monte de' Cenci; in May he rented a small house of his at Cerchi to Gaspare di Giovanpietro Carretti, Florentine, shipwright, etc.

Meantime serious trouble was banking up for him. "By reason of his vices," we read in the *Relazione* already frequently quoted, "and by reason of the disputes in the Rota between father and sons, the mortgagers and other creditors were not paid. They pressed their claims, and as they knew from the disputes in the Rota that the sons were trying to take from the father all the property held in trust from Rocco and Cristoforo,[2] they straightway forced action and obtained judgment. They had all these judgments and warrants consolidated, and executed them upon his palazzi and houses in Rome, and most of all upon the estates which the said Francesco possessed, particularly upon the estate of Torrenova and everything appertaining thereto, as is seen in the instrument of record of that execution on June 11, 13, 16, and 19, 1597, in the Acts of Florido, in which are registered 26 warrants and judgments of 26 creditors, in all for the sum of 31,673 scudi. And on the 29th of that month this warrant was deposited at the office of the Cursore for the purpose of auctioning these properties."[3] The sus-

[1] Among the tenants of this palazzo is registered a maestro Giov. Paolo, shoemaker.

[2] Not the sons of Francesco Cenci but his uncle and father, who bore the same names.

[3] The notary Florido attested the execution of many deeds at the end of the sixteenth century.

picion of the creditors was far from unfounded. On November 17th the Rota recognised that a genuine entail existed on the properties of the Cenci; Francesco could not alienate them, but was obliged to transmit them to his legitimate heirs.

The time has come for us to make the acquaintance of Cristoforo, another son of Francesco Cenci. Born April 25, 1572, he was destined to a death even more miserable than that of Rocco.

Until his twentieth year we find no record of any misdemeanours on his part and are disposed to think a little better of him than of his brothers, if only for the way in which his father deals with him in his will. But suddenly the evil blood ferments and bursts forth in him no less. We find, on March 9, 1593, that Marco Cellino, Florentine, steward of Cardinal Aldobrandino, brought a complaint against him for breaking gaol. This complaint was annulled on December 28, 1595. We do not know for what he was in prison; perhaps, not to be behind brother Giacomo, it was for debt. It seems that another suit for "the disavowal of debts" in the same year concerns him also; it would appear from this trial that he was living in concubinage with a woman.

In any case it is certain that the creditors of the Cenci brothers presented themselves in November 1594 to the judge delegated by the tribunal of the Auditor of the Camera, asking for a settlement. They were about thirty in number, only three Jews being among them. The counsel for the Cenci brothers was their relative Cesare, who soon after acted as their surety. The tribunal decided that the sum necessary for the purpose (16,000 scudi) should be subtracted from the rents of the estates of Torrenova and Testa di Lepre, and deposited in a bank.

In Lent, 1594, Cristoforo was in the Capitoline prisons. Ulisse Bartolucci, his counsel, testifying in the trial of Giacomo, February 18, 1595, said, "Last year in Lent Signor Cristoforo was a prisoner in the prisons of the

Capitol," and again, ". . . I said, in the Capitol, where Signor Cristoforo was prisoner."

As he grew older his life became more consistently disorderly. Possibly it was in one of his habitual nocturnal prowls that his house-servant, Lucantonio, received a sword wound in his right arm.

At any rate complaint was brought against Cristoforo in October 1595 by the Jew, Raffaele Micon or Misan, for insults and menaces. He agreed on the 26th of that month to withdraw the complaint. A few weeks later, near Santa Maria in Monticelli, where Rocco had been killed a little more than eight months before, his brother is wounded slightly (*sine periculo*) in the right thigh.

In 1596 he is in court under rather more creditable circumstances, merely giving bond that one Antonio di Donato will not ill-treat his wife, and that one Pietro Malizia will not molest a certain baker. But, in October 1597, he is in gaol again, at the Corte Savella, together with a servant, Ottavio Pali, a Mantuan (him we shall meet again later), son "of Dionisio, deceased," and his cousin, Giacomo Santacroce. The charge against the party was that they had abused and beaten another servant, Giovanni Battista Coradino, and even robbed him of his cloak. The poor wretch, it seems, had been making the singular request that his master should pay him his wages. Cristoforo and Santacroce were released a few days later, the former paying forty scudi, the latter thirty. The servant implicated with them was discharged.

It was not on account of such minor accidents, which were of small concern to Francesco, but for Cristoforo's rapacious attitude in the family suits, that the father decided to make a new will, which should exclude him, as well as Giacomo, from the estate, and which should leave him only the minimum required by law. In this document the charge is made that "the said Giacomo and Cristoforo have sued the testator and plotted and contrived by means of the Courts and by other means against the testator, and against his life, honour and property as Your Excel-

lencies know is of common report, and the matter open, notorious and manifest. For the above-mentioned reasons . . . the testator appoints as his heir the Holy Office of the Inquisition of Rome. . . ."

But this draft of a new will was never submitted to any notary.

CHAPTER X

SCHEMES FOR VENGEANCE

We know that one of the reasons which led Francesco Cenci to imprison his wife and daughter in La Petrella was his fear that they would escape—especially Beatrice. We know how they had insisted that he should remove them thence, and how cruelly he had opposed their wish.

Beatrice did in fact cherish a design of escaping; it was precisely "while the Signor Francesco was in Rome." She had recourse first to Marzio Catalano. She told him, he states, that "she had three little bags of currency, a silver cross, two chalices, ten golden rings, a silver basin and ewer, and fine clothing, and that we could get plenty of ready money for these besides leaving something for my family." Lucrezia stated that Beatrice indeed "had in her care all the possessions and the silver, that is a silver basin and jug, and there were other things in the house." [1]

Marzio continued, "She was determined not to lead that life any longer, since no one thought of trying to get her wedded, neither her father nor her brothers, and if she found no other remedy, she was ready to kill herself with her own hand." Such a phrase, it must be remembered, had a far deeper significance then than it would have to-day.

Marzio confirmed her intention of flight in another of his terrible examinations. He asserted that he had answered her, "God save me from it, my Lady; I do not wish to commit this misdeed."

[1] As we know, Beatrice Arias willed to Antonina a silver basin and jug, but Antonina perhaps took them with her when she married Luzio Savelli. It is therefore more probable that the silver basin and jug of which Catalano speaks were the ones that Francesco Cenci had received December 2, 1594, from the Bishop of Pola as security for a loan of ninety scudi.

In the first days of December 1597, the bestial wrath of Francesco Cenci was provoked anew. Beatrice had written several letters to her relatives in Rome adjuring them to bestir themselves to get her freed from La Petrella, and, if no marriage could be arranged for her, to place her in a convent. One of these letters, taken to Rome by Marzio Catalano, fell into the hands of Francesco. The beast in him rose, according to its wont. He decided to betake himself to La Petrella and chastise Beatrice.

This event, perhaps the prime cause of the terrible parricide which was to follow, is of such importance that the exact words of the witnesses must be reproduced in detail.

Lucrezia said, "I never heard from any of my folk [the Velli] that they would intervene with Signor Francesco, that he should remove us from there and bring us back to Rome; I truly did say by word of mouth to the couriers who went to and fro while Signor Francesco was in Rome that they should speak to my sons, for them to strive with Signor Francesco that he should bring us back to Rome, because we were being kept shut up close and in mountainous places." She also wrote to one of her sons, asking him to sign a petition directed to the Pope. On the other hand Giacomo deposed that Beatrice had written to him "that she desired that he should seek to make a marriage for her and to make some decision therefor in her regard; let him get her a husband or a cloister." He would not confess that the letters contained bitter protests against her father, but merely a request that he "would see to remedying matters."

Marzio Catalano is more explicit, "I have carried letters of the ladies . . . here to Rome four or five times to Signor Giacomo and to Stefano Velli, son of Signora Lucrezia, while the said ladies were at La Petrella; but I have often carried messages given me by word of mouth only . . . to Signor Giacomo and Signor Cristoforo, to find means to take away those ladies from La Petrella, for they would stay there no longer."

Beatrice's letter, which was given to Francesco, implored them "to try to marry her or send her to a convent, because she would no longer stay with her father, who was treating her badly." Giacomo, after reading it, gave it to his mother's brother, Marcello Santacroce. Marzio said, "That letter was then shown to Signor Marcello Santacroce by Signor Giacomo." This was confirmed by Messer Mario Fano of Rome, a person of authority. He was then about fifty-five; a kinsman of Francesco Cenci through having married Olimpia, sister of Ersilia Santacroce and widow of an Astalli. He said that Marcello Santacroce had told him in so many words that Beatrice had written "that she would not stay longer at La Petrella and that they must take her away from the place, otherwise she would do something desperate." [1] Perhaps Santacroce gave the letter to Francesco with good intentions, not hiding the fact from him that Marzio Catalano had brought it; but Santacroce had not taken into account Francesco's brutal character, and he was very far indeed from thinking of the consequences that his action would have.

In the trial Angelo Calcina, Roman, spoke also of the petition that Lucrezia and Beatrice may have had sent to the Pope. But there is some uncertainty about this document, as we shall see.

Giacomo handed the messenger, il Catalano, a tip of one testone [2] for his trouble. Francesco, however, hastened to Marzio Colonna, overlord of La Petrella, demand-

1 P. L. Bruzzone publishes an alleged letter of Beatrice to Marcello Santacroce, in which she pleads to be rescued from La Petrella where her father keeps her prisoner with her mother "and wields a bull-pizzle upon myself and Signora Lucrezia, and lately she was wounded in the cheek by his spur," etc. This letter is a forgery constructed upon poorly co-ordinated elements of fact. Beatrice did indeed write the letters brought to Rome by il Catalano, in November 1597, when the father was absent from La Petrella. When he arrived there on December 13th he beat his daughter with the bull-pizzle. But how could Beatrice have mentioned this fact in a letter written before it happened? More, she says in this letter also that her father struck his wife with a spur "lately." Yet this had taken place no less than two and a half years earlier, in the Spring of 1595.

2 Worth about 34 soldi, or cents.

ing punishment for his vassal, who, contrary to orders, was bringing letters from the women to Rome. Colonna, perhaps to rid himself of that woful individual, Francesco, consented that Catalano should be put in prison. He remained only two or three days. "Signor Francesco," said Catalano, "wished to know who had brought that letter, and having heard that I was the one, he had me sent to prison by order of Signor Marzio Colonna, and it was to him that Signor Francesco made instant request that I be gaoled, and I stayed a prisoner there two or three days."

Francesco left Rome on December 11th. The journey was toilsome, for the mountains he was obliged to traverse were covered with snow. He arrived at La Petrella on the 13th, the feast of Santa Lucia (the exact date is repeatedly given). Olimpio Calvetti had gone to meet him on the way. Francesco's spirit was completely occupied with a fierce desire to chastise Beatrice. The moment he arrived he had her brought forth; he demanded a reckoning for what she had attempted contrary to his wish and for what she had written to Rome about him and about his family arrangements. She attempted to defend herself; in terror, she denied having written the letter; but her father flourished it before her eyes; then, shouting, "I'll let you rot up here!" he took from its hook in his room a bull-pizzle ("well-remembered." Lucrezia called it) and lashed her with it violently. When she stretched forth her hands to defend herself, he struck them with such force as to tear off part of the nail from one finger; the scar was permanent.

"Signor Francesco did this," deposed Girolama of Capranica: "He took a bull-pizzle which he had there, and he dragged Signora Beatrice into a bedroom, and there he gave her a good thrashing with that fine bull-pizzle, saying to her that she had written to Rome and also sent a petition ['directed to Sig. Vincoli' adds Calidonia]; and Signora Beatrice denied it, and he kept her shut up in her bedroom for two or three days, and he himself brought her food, and he would open the door of the bed-

room, and put it on the floor and then he would go away at his good will." Calidonia supplements this by saying that the food consisted of "a little bread and a little wine."

However much Beatrice sought at first to cover up this incident in the trial (for a good reason, which we shall learn), its truth was clear to the judges, not only from the examinations of Girolama and Calidonia, as well as from those of Lucrezia and Bernardo, but above all, from the scar which remained on her finger.

It is not difficult to imagine what must have passed through the mind of Beatrice during the three days she remained a close prisoner, raw and aching from the blows dealt her; and guilty of no fault save of asking to be taken away from that dreary solitude, to be married or shut in a nunnery! In any case everything was summed up in the words to her stepmother when she was first removed from the room where she had endured everything, even to hunger, "I mean to make Signor Francesco repent of these blows he has given me!"

It was a sentence of death.

Francesco then summoned Marzio; because Marzio—who was always penniless—could not give him the single scudo remaining due on the price of the mare, he demanded and obtained as security a dress of Marzio's wife, "of purple colour"; to this we shall recur.

Meanwhile the two serving-women, who had remained till then fellow prisoners in the castle, declared that they too wished to leave. Life had already been intolerable when they were alone with the two women, who had always been kind to them; it became infinitely worse when they were every day within reach of Francesco Cenci. It seems that he installed himself for some days in the chamber where Lucrezia and Beatrice slept, before making new arrangements for the family in the apartments at present occupied. This room adjoined that of Girolama and Calidonia. It seems also that he paid not the slightest consideration to the presence of Beatrice. "I put up some sheets sewed to reeds between the two beds," said Girolama, "so that the girl would not be able to see when

Signor Francesco had to do with his wife." The two servants later told how, one evening, while all were about to retire, Lucrezia suddenly entered their room and cast herself in great agitation upon Girolama's bed, remaining there until Francesco, who had been for a short time in his own bed-chamber with Beatrice, reappeared and summoned his wife.

We refer to this strange story here in order to put it in its place chronologically; since it happened between December 16 and 26, 1597.[1] We are to return to it later and give it much attention, since upon this very record was based the whole report of the incest which, it is said, Francesco attempted, or, according to others, consummated upon his daughter.

We now come to the departure of Girolama and Calidonia from La Petrella; let us permit them to tell their stories in their own impetuous and rambling fashion. The first said: "On Christmas Day I went away for good and all, for I asked permission from Signor Francesco, and he wouldn't give it to me, and I said that I wanted to go for good in any case, and I did not want to stay there longer, but I had had to draw lots out of a hat to see if I should leave first or this Calidonia, aforementioned, and the lot fell to me, but I felt pity for Calidonia, who went about naked and her shame uncovered, and it was winter and the cold great." Again she continued, "There was nothing left for him to do but to kill me, and to have me robbed on the journey of the money which he had given me, after all the evil treatment he had had done to me while I was there with his people and himself; and when I was set free and set out for Rome, this Signor Francesco leaned out of the window of the castle and shouted while I was coming from the castle to La Petrella, "Hola, my women are going away and carrying money!" and he did that because that village was full of bandits, so that they would rob me on the road and murder me."

[1] Francesco arrived at La Petrella, December 13th. For three days Beatrice was imprisoned in a room; she was released the 16th. Girolama, a witness of the episode related by herself and Calidonia, left La Petrella the 26th.

Calidonia's groans, moans and sorrows were far different; "Signor Francesco sent me away alone and paid me. . . . I left the service of Signor Francesco because of the very great cruelty and evil treatment he did me, and I could never get a penny of my wages until the last day when I left (December 28, 1597), and my behind was showing; it was a shocking thing to see me since all my clothes were torn, and more still, I was going naked and unshod, for he would never have a pair of shoes made for me in those two years, and I continually sent to tell him that he should send me at least two scudi; he gave an answer for me to his servants who were going and coming from Rome, 'Who sees her, this naked servant-girl? There's a fire there, she can get warm,' and for that I swore that I would never work for gentlemen again. . . . Come Christmas I left, and I asked permission, and he would not give it to me, but finally he did give it to me, and he paid me and sent me away alone." Here poor Calidonia, speaking to the judge, began to moan and weep once more, "Oh, when I think of it, my heart breaks in two, because he dismissed another serving-woman, who was old, named Geronima, and he gave her the horse and an escort, and he gave me no help, telling me that I had good legs and I was a fine strong girl; and I had to find a guide called Mariano, and I paid his expenses, and I gave him one scudo out of the pay I had received; and because it was winter time the snow came up above my ankles; and he used still another cruelty upon me, for he refused to give me any reference that I had been his servant, which I asked him for, and I had to pay fifteen giulii apiece for lodging in three places, and the travellers on the way said I was a courtesan, because I had no reference, and that other old woman he did give a reference to."

When the two luckless servants had gone their way, Francesco hired in the village "a wench nine or ten years old," and sent to Rome for a new manservant. Giorgio, son of Andrea Vandrè, deceased, Venetian, was engaged. He was a thin, tall old man who always dressed in dark

blue. The poor fellow struggled as best he could over the snowy mountains; he arrived at La Petrella on January 6, 1598, Sunday, the feast of Epiphany.

The manner of Francesco Cenci's existence on the heights is indicated by a throng of depositions; some of them, we shall see, give explicit details of habits of incredible vulgarity.

Francesco decided that no servants should thenceforth live in the antechamber; he sent Beatrice to sleep in another room fairly distant, at the foot of a flight of steps; he reserved for himself and Lucrezia the room he was then occupying. It had served as the nuptial chamber of Olimpio and Plautilla; hence Olimpio knew it very well. Francesco commonly rose late, especially in winter; he had good reason, for he was often tormented by gout. Having risen, he went with the ladies to the fortress chapel, adjoining the battlemented piazza, to hear mass. This was said in a three-day rotation by the three priests of La Petrella; the arch-priest, Don Marzio Tommasini, and the two canonicals, Domenico Salvati and Francesco Scossa. He would give them "a giulio, every morning, as alms." If Cenci was late in rising, the priest was obliged to wait, sometimes as much as an hour. After mass Cenci would ride among the near-by mountains, if his health and the season permitted; otherwise he would remain in seclusion, addling his brain over his hopeless accounts; these he never tired of revising with his own hand; after a long struggle with them he would lock them jealously in a strongbox. His companion on his trips was ordinarily Olimpio, for whom he showed an inordinate regard, in this first period of the return to La Petrella. "He would take Olimpio with him when he went riding," said Lucrezia; and Girolama added, "He did so many kindnesses to Olimpio, that when a chicken was cooked at home, the first piece was for Olimpio, and he would say, 'Take this to the castellan.' "

About noon the Cenci would lunch. What with the constant changing of servants—or with their utter absence—

it happened that sometimes the serving-women cooked, sometimes the menservants, and not infrequently Lucrezia or Beatrice; it was Beatrice, as we know, to whom was entrusted the care of the silverware, the linen, and the fabrics kept in chests disposed about the various rooms, except that of Francesco.

Francesco and his wife ate together in their bedroom. They were served, for the reason given above, now by women, now by men-servants; and when there were neither, by Beatrice. Except on rare occasions, she always ate separately, either alone or with the serving-women, when there were any.

In the afternoon Francesco would at first rest, then stroll about the rock, sometimes taking the ladies with him to the castle terrace. Thence he would return to his business or would perhaps go forth with his dear Olimpio. Dinner passed as had the luncheon; the family retired, said Lucrezia, four or five hours after Ave Maria, "according as Signor Francesco was more or less sleepy."

Francesco's retirement meant no small occupation for the ladies. Either some maidservant or Lucrezia or Beatrice was obliged to pull off his long thigh-boots, which few at that period succeeded in removing unaided.[1] His bed was warmed in cold weather; when he had entered it, a disgusting performance began. His legs had to be scraped, up to the belly, with a towel, for the remains of the itch which still afflicted him. On account of the repugnance of the serving-women to perform this task, he would more commonly have recourse to his wife and daughter; for them he had not the slightest consideration of human decency. And at last, his wife would take her place beside him.

His grossness, so abundantly witnessed and certified to, knew no bounds; in cold weather he would draw the close-stool near the fire in full view of the ladies, to whose lot it

1 We may see a picture of a girl removing her father's boots, beside the bed, in a *storietta* of Saint Nicola of Bari, of the school of Gentile da Fabriano, preserved in the Vatican Gallery.

fell to empty it. In summer he did not scruple to wander about the house, in the heat of the day, clad in little more than his shirt.

When Beatrice came forth from the room wherein she had brooded, livid with blows and hatred, on her vengeance, her mind was quite made up to slay her father. From all the documents read and evidence given during the trial the fact emerges that she was the moving spirit in the great tragedy. But no one can be blind to the fact that few creatures on earth have had a more cruel and abominable parent. In the light of the facts, no one to-day would deny her that pity which forgives or at least that sympathy, which, in criminal cases, finds its expression in the phrase, "extenuating circumstances."

Her desperation stirred Olimpio. For all his impetuous, reckless nature, which had led him into crime, he was not without some spark of feeling. We have seen how the Colonna esteemed him, how he had been repeatedly in the midst of conflict, how he made much of his outward appearance. We have yet to see with what devotion he loved his little daughter, how as a member of a robber band he protected some poor prisoner, and how finally he fell into the toils through the naïve confidence he always reposed in any who professed friendship toward him. Olimpio's pity was soon transformed into another emotion, and one which overmastered Beatrice also—if indeed she had not provoked it. She was already in her twentieth year and in her veins ran the mad blood of Francesco Cenci. Olimpio was an unusually handsome man; she was passing through a dreadful period; her soul was racked with anguish; her body had ripened to full, vigorous womanhood.

She gave herself to him; their intimacies became frequent; they lasted long; for Olimpio had found a means of coming by night to her room.

We shall see what consequences followed the amour.

When the letter was published (in 1879) which Messer Baldassarre Paolucci, representative of Modena in Rome, wrote to his Duke at Modena on August 14, 1599 (be-

fore Beatrice's punishment), the polemics that raged about her name became violent. There were many who set up a cry of calumny; there were some who affirmed that no document could justify such outrageous statements. Beatrice must remain at any cost the "Roman Virgin."

History for us is a different matter. History is for us the expression of the frank, honest, absolute sincerity of him who writes it. In this case of ours, History comes with the verity of its facts to evoke from the shadows of the tomb a Beatrice who is indeed culpable, but who is human and unfortunate and no less worthy of commiseration. How many women in our own world forget their duty, amid the affection of all who surround them, even amid prosperity, peace, felicity! Who will dare to condemn Beatrice Cenci, tortured unjustly by an infamous father, if she abandoned herself to one who took pity on her and who offered to avenge her? History is no less welcome than fable when its record seeks to touch our hearts.

Here is the sentence of the agent of the Duke of Modena (reported to him as a revelation made by Beatrice herself): "She confessed that through her will to kill her father she had compassed her own death, and (what afflicted her more) she had lost thereby her virginity, reft from her by that one who did the deed; a thing not known heretofore." [1]

At La Petrella, however, it was known fairly early, indeed, almost immediately. Neither Beatrice nor Olimpio possessed the circumspection that keeps such relations a secret from those near at hand. Plautilla did not succeed in dissimulating her own jealousy; Marzio Catalano declared explicitly that "Olimpio was greatly criticised that he had to do with Signora Beatrice," and Lucrezia, referring to the time when Francesco whipped his daughter, added that the girl "then began to speak secretly with Olimpio; and she would speak to him sometimes on the stairs and sometimes from the windows, and sometimes through a hole in the ceiling of an upper room; and when Signor Francesco remained to sleep at the

[1] See Beatrice Cenci, Vol. II, p. 136.

Capuchin monastery for the night and when he went to Aquila after Santi de Pompa, who had fled away, and when he went in pursuit of his sons, I mean Bernardo and Paolo, who had fled to Rome [we shall soon learn of these occurrences], then Olimpio would always come to our rooms, that is, Beatrice's and ours, and there he would begin to speak with Beatrice, and I would go to bed and leave them to talk together." And even if one should persist that these frequent meetings of Beatrice and Olimpio were nothing more than an over-long elaboration of the plot against Francesco Cenci, all uncertainty disappears in the face of other and more outspoken witnesses. These will reveal the fact that Olimpio penetrated to Beatrice's room and remained there the night long; that Marzio Colonna was informed of the intrigue; that Giacomo Cenci, on the return of the ladies to Rome after the crime, was also told of it and rose in anger against his sister and Olimpio; that Camillo Rosati, agent of the house of Colonna, was fully aware of Beatrice's terror lest Olimpio "be taken, in case it should ever become public that he had had carnal knowledge of her." The words are her own.

Giacomo revealed much, at his dramatic confrontation with his stepmother: "Signor Marzio Colonna dissuaded me from having Olimpio made prisoner because matters touching our honour might be revealed." Lucrezia was franker: "in order not to cast shame on this girl Beatrice and the whole family." Rosati repeated that Giacomo had adjured him to take Olimpio far from Rome, "for some matters which it had been observed he was doing with the Signora Beatrice, his sister."

We shall learn other serious facts and listen to weighty evidence later. Here it suffices to say, in reply to the many who have persisted that nothing appears from the trial to confirm the revelation of the Duke of Modena's agent, that reference is made in the trial to intimate relations between Olimpio and Beatrice by six witnesses, and no less than twenty times!

CHAPTER XI

THE DEATH OF CRISTOFORO

The first months of 1598 passed without events of great moment for Francesco Cenci, but not without annoyances.

First, news reached him that Emilio Morea, husband of his daughter Lavinia, had been incarcerated about the middle of January;[1] and from February 11th onward had been standing his trial on the charge of having aided Giovanni Antonio Nari in the latter's attempt to poison his own brother, Francesco, "gentleman of Rome." This Francesco had received professedly as a gift from certain nuns, a poisoned tart, which had disastrously affected the bowels of some who had partaken of it. Inquiries were made; it was discovered that the origin of the tart had been attributed to the nuns to disarm suspicion; the parties upon whom suspicion of sending it lay most heavily were Giovanni Antonio Nari, who had had civil litigation with his brother, and Morea, not only because he was a close friend of Giovanni Antonio, but because he cherished "much dissatisfaction" against Francesco Nari.

The witnesses for the defence stated that Francesco Nari was "for his own part a vexatious person," and "a bully," and that they considered Emilio innocent, incapable of such a crime, "an upright man and of good life," "a serious, decent-living, virtuous person," etc. But contrary opinions were not lacking. Giovanni Battista Incoronato said that he had heard talk of a certain trial of Morea "for unnatural vice," he knew not with what result; and Lodovico Montirolo, physician of Rimini, alluded in his turn to an imprisonment inflicted for "dif-

[1] Bertolotti writes that he was incarcerated on February 11, 1597, and Bruzzone follows the error. Neither the day nor the year have any correspondence with the facts.

ferences" with Nari, whence the "much dissatisfaction" mentioned above.

Early in April the servant, Giorgio, refused to remain longer at La Petrella in the service of Francesco Cenci. Francesco had a certain confidence in him; every evening he made him mount the stairs to his own bedroom, often even when he was in bed, to receive the money for the marketing; finally he piled too much work on the servant's shoulders. As though the daily climb up and down from castle to village and back were not enough for an old man, Giorgio was sent out among woods and mountains to hunt for lost lambs and bring them back to the fold. The old servant could bear it no longer; he made up his mind to leave. And so, with his long legs and his singular blue costume, he took the road to Rome, where Francesco's affairs were becoming day by day more distressful.

The creditors paid little heed to the decisions of the Rota concerning the entail restriction. Supported by other decisions, they posted proclamations of sale. On April 21st the Collegio Romano offered 80 scudi per rubbio [1] for the estates of Lucembro and Leviano; on the 23d the Rotulo [2] offered 70 scudi the rubbio for Tor Carbone. One month later the creditors, in a meeting, "deputed Monsignore Lelio Biscia (who was later made Cardinal by Urban VIII) and Giacomo Cavallerini to settle the auctioning of those properties, which had been adjudged to the two institutions making bids." [3]

So we come to June; the month brought to Francesco various events; one of them was of the utmost seriousness.

[1] Rubbio: a somewhat variable measurement; about 185 ares, or 4.6 acres.—*Trans.*

[2] For the Rotulo see H. Platus, *De Cardinalis dignitate* (Rome, 1746) p. 87: "Rotulus constitit in quadam massa communi, quam habet S. Collegium instar Capitulorum et Collegiorum quae solet administrari per Cardinalem Camerarium particularem ejusdem Sacri Collegii."

[3] The *Relazione* reads "Briscia" instead of "Biscia." This error and others as well which cannot be imputed to the author prove that the Vatican ms. of the *Relazione*, etc., is a copy, not an original. In fact its accuracy is not on a par with its calligraphy.

Island of San Bartolomeo, 1676

First, Santi de Pompa departed unseen from the rooms on the battlemented terrace and took to flight. He was perhaps aware of all that was taking place between Beatrice and Olimpio and fearful of the terrible tragedy which might spring from it if ever Cenci should discover it. Francesco learned that he had taken the road to Aquila and pursued him; but probably the fugitive, a native mountaineer, was able to hide his traces among the thickets and forests; he was neither tracked down nor caught.

Francesco on his return was greeted by terrible news. His son Cristoforo had been killed in Rome on June 12th.

This occurrence deserves to be related, in detail, if only that the many fables which have till now gathered about it may be dissipated.[1]

A certain rich lady, Virginia by name, widow of Domenico Bruno, lived with two sons, of whom the eldest was named Paolo, in a mansion on the piazza di San Benedetto in Piscinula, across the Tiber, and almost opposite the ancient palazzo Mattei. The Bruno family had come from Corsica, so that father and sons were more often given the name of Còrso than that of Bruno. Signora Virginia had also a daughter, but at the time of our record the daughter had married a Messer Pietro Pisciacane and no longer lived with her mother. There were many servants in the Bruno household; in the service of Paolo alone there were four or five, among them a Moor named Angelo and one called "the Spaniard," a man savage of aspect and spirit, "a little fellow, about forty-five, full of life, and with a bristly face, a clipped beard over his whole face, or what is called 'an apostolic beard,' with grey hair." This description of him was given to the judge by Nicola Imperiacci, also a Corsican and cousin of Paolo Bruno. "In the very beginning when he came to stay in the house of Signor Paolo, maybe five or six months ago, he said to me also that he had been to the wars of La Goletta,[2] and that he

[1] P. L. Bruzzone, who has twice concerned himself with Cristoforo, has not examined the original minutes of the trial; such a procedure would have led him to a complete revision of many facts.

[2] A port of Tunis.

had been taken prisoner by the Turks, and that he had been in the hands of the Turks 22 [months?] and he had escaped into Transylvania or Hungary." Others called him "a very ugly customer."

The Bruno house, as we have said, was in Piscinula, on the right bank of the river, exactly opposite the bridge of San Bartolomeo, which joins the island to the Trastevere. Consequently when coming to the centre of Rome, Bruno always crossed this bridge, then the island, then the Quattrocapi bridge, so called because of the pedestal of Hermes with four faces which is still to be seen there. Now on this island he chanced to see two sisters of rare beauty. He learned that they were daughters of one Luca Raponi, then dead, of Monte San Giovanni; the girls were also Corsican; the name of one was Plautilla, spouse of Valerio di Benedetto of Poggibonsi; the other, Cleria, was married to Giovan Antonio of San Severino, "a decent man and honourable," first an inn-keeper, then a fisherman; as he went frequently to Ostia and remained there long, he left great liberty to his wife, which she, truth to tell, did not fail to abuse.

These two very beautiful sisters had at the time two brothers: Vincenzo, or Cencio, "a clean-shaven, brown-faced young man," who worked for Michele, a riding-master, and Antonio, nicknamed Tollo, who interests us more. He had been a fish-hawker; but, sharing his sisters' comeliness, he had soon abandoned this humble trade. Giving much heed to his apparel and manners, he had finally been received into the establishment of Abate Settimio De Cuppis in the Piazza Navona; he had previously been there as a boy, when his own father Luca, together with Girolamo De Cuppis, father of the abate, "used to keep a pawnshop." Tollo is described as a youth with a reddish beard, and a slightly sunburnt face, "pleasant-mannered, gentlemanly," who wore cloak and sword both day and night. In the De Cuppis household he held the post of superintendent; on the outside, he made little loans, or, to put it plainly, played the usurer.

Paolo Corso already had as his mistress one Plautilla

Spineti, a courtesan living at Capo le Case, wife of Pietro Paolo Scalabrini. None the less, he fell desperately in love with Cleria. She was made acquainted with his passion; she spoke of him pleasantly enough, as "il Corsetto," [1] since he was young, and, like most Corsicans, a little short of stature.

He confided in two expert procuresses, Flaminia and Dionora d'Amatrice, and penetrated Cleria's defences. This was in the summer of 1597. Though his purpose was attained, his ardour did not diminish; rather did he fall more completely under her spell the more she appeared to be enamoured of him. Being a rich man, he loaded her with gifts, while her unhappy husband was "going on short rations," as one malevolent woman put it, in his poor trade of fisherman.

To the neat dwelling of his sweetheart, the little Corsican sent ample provisions of grain, all sorts of delicacies, magnificent garments, once a necklace of pearls and once a turquoise which she wore openly.

The impassioned intrigue became more and more public. Cleria paraded the protection of the young and wealthy Còrso, as he the possession of a remarkable beauty. Don Lancillotto Petroni, reverend rector of San Benedetto in Piscinula, told the judge that Paolo went so far as to bring him to the island "to see a beautiful girl in the piazzetta di San Bartolomeo," with whom, as he already knew, Paolo was on friendly terms.

Finally "the whole island" and the Trastevere near by talked of it—"down to the little boys," exclaimed one witness. Naturally the one who said the most atrocious things about Cleria was the woman whom il Còrsetto had abandoned, Plautilla Scalabrini. She related, even to those who had no wish to listen, and repeated later to the judge, that "Paolo goes to Cleria's house because he has to do carnally with her." She knew the hours when he went there and she added that the woman was costing him a ruinous sum. Plautilla, in short, spied upon Cleria and once succeeded in keeping her close company.

[1] "The little Corsican."—*Trans.*

It is January 29, 1598, the last Thursday of Carnival. A mad, boisterous tumult rages in the Corso, where the races are soon to be run. Leafy branches, oranges, eggs, sweetmeats, are launched from the street at the windows, and from the windows into the thronged street, to which little blackguard boys add all manner of filth. Cleria, her sister, Plautilla, her cousin, Vittoria, an old woman named Attilia, to whom we shall recur, and others are on a balcony, to which they have paid admission.

Plautilla Scalabrini, Paolo's deserted mistress, has also mounted there; her heart devoured by spite and jealousy, she watches the scene which she herself so vivaciously describes, "Paolo came down below alone on a horse and he stopped there in front of us, and he made the horse curvet and he looked at Cleria and laughed to her, and she looked at him and laughed at him, and she threw an egg to him, and so on for all the time that she stayed there watching the races run, this Paolo stayed there in the street, and they made love together; and then afterwards on that same occasion, Tollo, the fish-hawker, came up to us; and because he was speaking so freely and licentiously to those ladies, I asked him what ladies were those; and he said to me that they were his sisters; and then I told Tollo that he should take warning that Paolo Corso was making love on the sly with her [Cleria] and that she returned it to him, and that she was throwing eggs at him."

So Plautilla told her tale, but the episode had been more serious. She had not asked Tollo merely who the women were; knowing very well that they were his sisters, she had put the question, "Do you know those two trollops?" and had pointed out to him how imprudent Cleria and Paolo were in acting so shamelessly before the public.

Tollo then went to his sister and scolded her. Forbidding her to leave the house when her husband was not there, he struck her. He then descended to the Corso and spoke with Paolo; but his statement that he reproached Paolo and that Paolo denied all that the courtesan had just told him is open to doubt. Such would have been pure comedy. The excellent Tollo knew extremely well

what was happening between il Còrsetto and his sister, and the benefits she obtained from the liaison. Eventually some of the pickings fell to his share; among other things, he was well rewarded when he accepted the post of carver at the wedding banquet of Paolo's own sister.

However, this episode in the Corso gave rise to long and active gossip and wrangling, especially on the island and in Piscinula. Gossip buzzed more loudly; the intrigue became the favourite subject of talk of the island. Even old Attilia did not put a guard on her tongue; she was the widow of one Bartolomeo, and had gone to live with Cleria in April 1598, at the behest of Paolo himself. In fact, he maintained her and her sick son Girolamo; he kept her by the side of his sweetheart as a sort of duenna, with the title of "companion."

On June 9th, 1598, Cristoforo Cenci, crossing the island, catches sight of Cleria. Her beauty amazes him, overwhelms him, sets his blood on fire. It is Cenci blood, and he is only twenty years old. His first thought is to possess the girl, and he loses no time in seeking means of gratifying his passion. He haunts the island continually, he brings his servant there—Ottavio Pali, a Mantuan. Pali says: "I noticed that she was a lovely girl, dressed in serge." He goes there with another servant, called Gattone, and in order to attract Cleria's attention, plays hand-ball against the walls of her house. He takes Agostino Caponico d'Amatrice to the same spot, and, speaking of Cleria, tells his companion: "I mean to have her." But Caponico gives him some advice: "When you are after these things, you want to go alone and not be seen on watch. Otherwise you will not accomplish much. What are you doing now? Making love to the walls and attracting every one's attention. For God's sake, let us get out of this!"

Cristoforo did not hearken to such prudent advice. He continued his hunt openly, and Paolo Bruno perceived it or was quickly informed of it. Yet Paolo twice met Cristoforo, who was his friend, during those very days, without making a sign.

Cristoforo Cenci's means of access to Cleria's heart was the same that the little Corsican had used; the old pander, Flaminia. Cristoforo learned that Flaminia's husband, Bastiano Vicari of Ravenna, was in the Capitoline prisons for debts; he informed her that he would go bail and bond for her husband, when Flaminia had aided him in speaking to Cleria.

Ottavio Pali stated to the judge on June 13th: "It may be now three or four days [it was, to be precise, the 11th] since a boy came to speak to Signor Cristoforo"; and the master, after having spoken to him, "told me that I should give him a cloak and sword"; and when both had been given him "we went to the Capitol, and having got to the hall, he told us to wait there, Cesare [Bussone] and I, and he went into the prison. And he stayed there a little time and then he came forth; and while returning homeward he said to me: 'Perhaps we have found the way to have words with that girl of the Island, for this fellow who is prisoner here, who sent for me, has told me that Flaminia, his wife, had done many services for her.' And thus returning homeward, we took the road by this Flaminia's house. And not finding her at home, he left some word with her neighbour, a woman of Amatrice [Jacoma Apolloni], and we went off home. But not seeing Flaminia, the master sent me to her house; she told me that yesterday morning (June 12th) she would come early to the master's house; and yesterday morning she did come, and spoke to Signor Cristoforo; and he informed me that she had done other services for that girl."

Flaminia was examined immediately afterwards, on the same day, June 13th; she affirmed that she had known Cristoforo Cenci only from the morning of the day before.

The previous evening, said she, on returning home, "Jacoma Matriciana, my lodger, told me that one of the Cenci gentlemen wished to speak to me." That evening, she continued, a servant [Ottavio] came to her to repeat that Cenci wished to see her. She went there in the morning and waited a long time. When he finally arrived, "he began to tell me that he desired to aid my husband, who is

prisoner in the Capitol for debt, and he wished me to answer for him. And after these words he sought to know if I was acquainted with a Donna Attilia who lives in the house of a certain Cleria who lives on the island. And he had sought me out that I might tell her His Lordship wished to speak to her. That first time I said that I would put a word in her ear, and I went off to my home. Then yesterday evening a servant [Ottavio again] came to my house to summon me on the order of this Signor Cristoforo. I went to his house and told him that I had not yet done this service for him; but that I would get speech with her to-day."

She specified this last detail in order to disburden herself of any responsibility for what had taken place; she also denied having received five giulii from Cristoforo, but Ottavio, set on the stand against her, affirmed, "When I came to your house to call you, and I asked you if there was good news, you told me there was, that you had spoken to Cleria and there was good news." Then, turning to the judge: "If she had not come with her good news to Signor Cristoforo, perhaps he would not have gone out last night!"

When Flaminia came to Cristoforo's dwelling, on the evening of the twelfth, she noticed, both going and returning, "that the great gates of the Jews' Quarter were not shut." It must then have been a little after the Ave Maria, as the five gates of the Jews' Quarter, between the Tiber and the Portico d'Ottavio, were closed at the first hour of night.

We have come to the evening of June 12th. All the characters of the approaching tragedy are now at dinner in different parts of the city.

Whoever comes to the house of Cleria dines well, for the costs are amply defrayed by the Corsican lover—not to mention the luckless husband, who is at Ostia fishing for sturgeon. Cencio, Cleria's brother, comes to see her, and stays to dine; her sister, Plautilla, arrives; she also remains to dine.

Paolo Còrso had returned early from La Magliana, where he had been selling cattle; he was seated with some others on the bench outside his house. He was displaying a key and muttering with a sinister air, "This is the key of the three martyrs!" It was "a solid key, black and ugly; he did not say whether or not it was to Cleria's door." He then called for dinner.

Those at the table were Paolo, his two cousins, Battista and Francesco, Meo Coneri, the miller, Valerio Bonafede of Florence, and Ulisse Bartolucci, then Paolo's solicitor, and less than three years before, as we have seen, solicitor of our Cristoforo. Among the four serving men were the Moor and the Spaniard, whose acquaintance we have made. The talk ran on "the courtesies of gentlemen and on good manners."

As for Cristoforo, after a stroll in the Regola with Agostino Caponico and a game of backgammon with him and with Girolamo Cenci and Camillo de' Massimi, he excused himself, saying that he was obliged to call upon His Excellency, Ulisse Moscato, prosecutor for the Vicar of Rome in criminal cases, to present to him a petition concerning the services of Caponico. He did not return. In the intervening time, as we have seen, he spoke again with Flaminia.

Ottavio Pali and Cesare Bussone, after waiting on their master's table, went to dine, as was their custom, in Stefano's inn.

The tragic hour drew nigh. On Ottavio's return from the inn, Cristoforo Cenci summoned him, had his hat, sword, and "plain jerkin" brought; donning his cloak, he said, "Let us set out." Ottavio tells the story: "I took the sword and left the house; when we had come below Sig. Cristoforo said gaily: 'Ottavio, three evenings are not past [he meant three evenings since he had first seen Cleria] and that w . . . Flaminia has brought me good news; I have given her five giulii, and I do not think she will cheat me. I have told her that if she does her part I will give her another five giulii.' So then—it might have

The Quattro Capi Bridge on the Island of San Bartolomeo at Rome

been the first hour of the night—we went walking both together through the Regola, and then we went by Pescaria, and we crossed the Quattro Capi bridge, and we walked through the Trastevere, and it must have been the second hour when he tried to look through an iron-barred gate, and a dog which was behind the gate barked at him, and Signor Cristoforo was frightened; then he said, 'I want to go to the Island for a while,' and so we went to Flaminia's house, which is in the Trastevere." Cristoforo asked Ottavio if Flaminia was within; Ottavio said she was; they then returned to the island.

Meanwhile Paolo Còrso's dinner had come to an end; he, his cousin Battista, Meo the miller and Ulisse Bartolucci set forth together "toward Rome." Halting on the bridge of San Bartolomeo, between the island and Trastevere, they perceived a man enveloped in a cloak, followed by another who passed close to Paolo.

Paolo recognised in the first Cristoforo Cenci; in the second Bartolucci recognised Ottavio; but both pretended not to have recognised them, and continued on their way. Paolo then said to his friends, "That is Cristoforo Cenci"; and Cristoforo said to his servant, "Watch where those fellows go." Seeing that the group was crossing the island "toward Rome," Cristoforo and his man went on to Trastevere. Ottavio continues, "When I threw my cloak round me, I felt that it was wet, and I thought that the said Paolo had made water on the cloak, but I did not wish to say anything on that account to Signor Cristoforo because he is a little testy and I feared lest he should turn back to do something to Paolo for having made water on me while he passed me standing on the bridge."

The Corsican was to go far beyond this contemptuous act! When he had come to the end of the Quattro Capi bridge, "which touches the Hebrew Quarter," he allowed Meo Coneri and Battista to accompany Ulisse Bartolucci "to the Pizzicaroli in the Piazza Giudea" near by, where Bartolucci lived. Paolo himself turned back, ran to his home to get a lantern and to take the Spaniard as his aid.

When Battista, who lived in Paolo's house, and Meo Coneri again crossed the island, they saw Cristoforo and his man once more.

What happened then? The versions are at variance; yet Ottavio's is most worthy of credence. He says, "Signor Cristoforo went to the piazzetta of the island by the street of San Bartolomeo and he told me to enter that same piazzetta by way of a narrow alley which is there. And I returned to the piazzetta, where I found Signor Cristoforo walking to and fro, and he told me to stand to one side and so I did, and sat down on some steps, where I went to sleep. And the Signore was walking to and fro on the piazzetta. And while I was sleeping, I heard a great running and racing there in the alley I have just spoken of. And as I was about to step forward, I beheld two people coming down that lane with swords bare, all panting, and one carried the lantern and seemed to me a young man, and the other was a fellow with a great beard; and these, seeing me, then came after me, and I defended myself with my sword. And one of them, that is, the one with the lantern, said, 'Come on, come on!' And they took my hat which was on the ground, and they made off down the street which leads to Santo Bartolomeo. And I went off down the alley." He continues later: "When we got to the piazzetta, Signor Cristoforo said to me, 'Go back in there, in that corner at the end of the piazza!'" He added that the words surprised him, for Cenci ordinarily kept him close at his side, "and therefore, it may be that he did this in order to enter the house of this Cleria, but I do not know if he did enter there." He testified further: "I did not recognise Paolo, I could not see him because I could not see if the man with the lantern was Paolo, although he had Paolo's build, because he always kept the lantern in front of him; but the other man, I saw him well; he had a great ugly beard, and also it was he who picked up my hat off the ground."

By this tale Ottavio sought to conceal the fact that when his master had been attacked by Paolo and the Spaniard, he had taken to his heels, losing even his sword-

scabbard "in the alley." It may be remarked that his adversaries, by their scornful treatment of his cloak and by their carrying off his hat, showed that they fully appreciated his worth.

Some said that Cristoforo Cenci was brought to Cleria's house by Flaminia, and that he was confronted and assailed by Paolo when he had but just arrived at her door; others asserted that the encounter took place as Cristoforo was issuing forth from Cleria's dwelling and Paolo was entering; according to others, it was when Paolo was leaving and Cristoforo entering.

One Laodamia told that "her little girl, named Clementia, having gone out at her door, saw two men in Cleria's doorway, who were about to come forth, and she come into the house and said, 'Mamma, there are two men in Cleria's house'; and she herself came forth and saw them too, but the door was shut."

Were these Cristoforo and Ottavio, or Paolo and the Spaniard?

What we know for certain is that the last two attacked Cristoforo, wounded him to death with a thrust in the left thigh, near the groin, overtook his servant, but spared the man's life, merely carrying off his hat as a trophy, and fled before the Island was aroused.

Cristoforo, holding his wound with his hands, succeeded in crossing the Quattro Capi bridge, leaving a trail of blood behind him; he collapsed a few paces beyond. Meanwhile his heroic servant descended through the alley to the edge of the Tiber, followed the river bank, went up on the island again, crossed the bridge and discovered his master "lying at full length on the ground." He bent over him and attempted to raise him up. His sword, hands, stockings and shoes became smeared with blood. He then tried to conduct his master to his palazzo, not far distant, but in vain. "He took four steps and then said he could not do it." He fell between two statues.

Ottavio left the wounded man there and ran to the Cenci. He found Bernardo, and rapidly recounted the affair; the two went to arouse Giacomo. "I told him,"

said the servant, "that Signor Cristoforo was wounded to death and we would have to take a chair there; I called Cesare [Bussone], my companion; we took a chair and went to Pescaria, where we found Signor Cristoforo on the ground, dead, about eight or ten paces from where I had left him." The unhappy youth, feeling death at hand, had made a supreme effort; he had risen again to his feet, taken a few steps toward his own house, had fallen again and breathed his last.

Among those who then appeared were Giacomo and Bernardo, the dead man's brothers; Bussone, his servant; the inevitable Orazio Pomella, who had been roused from his bed; and also Giacomo Santacroce, cousin and close friend of Cristoforo Cenci, who had been with him when he beat Coradino.

Soon Flaminia, the impudent procuress, ran up. She had perhaps seen the wounding of Cristoforo, close at hand or from a distance. A crowd gathered. Ottavio says, "Signor Giacomo cried, 'We won't move him; let us go call the sbirri.'" Later, in the trial for parricide, Pomella drew a very striking picture of the cynicism of the two Cenci: "Your Lordship does not know," he said to Moscato, "the nature of Signor Giacomo. I wish to tell you one thing; when Signor Cristoforo Cenci, his brother, was slain last June, Signor Giacomo came to my house to summon me about the third and a half hour of the night, and he said to me, 'Get dressed, will you? Hurry up and come down!' And so I rose from my bed and came down in my shirt and drawers, and he said to me that his brother Cristoforo was slain, and I said to him, 'Where was he killed?' He answered, 'Here is his servant just now come to tell us.' And so I went back up the stairs, and I dressed and we went with Signor Giacomo and the servant . . . to Monte Giordano to call the *sbirri;* and then coming by the Campo, we brought a notary, called Giuseppe Spoletino, notary of the Governor." At the sight of the "body of Signor Cristoforo at the end of Pescaria . . . I wept, and the others wept too because we found the body all bloody and soiled with

mud; but Signor Giacomo was not moved at all, nor did he shed one tear; no more did Signor Bernardo, his brother, though still a young boy. But such is the breed! Can I help it?"

The first action of Messer Ovidio, Chief Constable of Rome, at Monte Giordano, was to put Ottavio under arrest. Then followed by his *sbirri*, he entered the island and barred the gates so that none should leave. While some carried the corpse to San Tommaso de' Cenci, there followed a great pounding on all the doors and a great shouting at all the windows, with the usual dramatic accompaniment of noise, shouting, lanterns and torches characteristic of the police of those days.

At the first threat the truth issued forth from hundreds of mouths—women's mouths, nearly all of them. The slayer of Cristoforo Cenci was Paolo Bruno; and Cleria was to blame for everything. A flood of allusions and gossip was unloosed upon her women friends and her procuresses and the net was cast about them all. Cleria, Flaminia, Jacoma Apolloni, Laodamia, and Dionora were arrested and taken to the Corte Savella; also one Silvestro Pandini of Lucca, who only learned what had happened while the *sbirri* were carrying him off. Messer Marco Bello, Deputy Prosecutor, passed the night and morning on the island the centre of a swarm of agents, interrogating "all those women," arresting some, letting others go.

Meanwhile the news of Cristoforo's murder spread through Rome. Cenci and Bruno belonged to such well-known families that interest was bound to be general. Talk of it filled the streets, the squares, the shops. Pietro Paolo Scalabrini relates that he was in the Capitol, filing a certain complaint, when a man came to speak secretly to Signor Muzio, who took his cloak and left immediately. Scalabrini waited a long time and was preparing to take his departure when the other returned and said that Cristoforo Cenci had been murdered, "that he had just one wound in one thigh, and he said that it was rumoured that Paolo Bruno was the culprit." It was

added by others that "the cause was a lady who lives on the Island."

Valerio, husband of Plautilla Raponi, and therefore a kinsman of Tollo and Cleria, stated on the 13th: "This morning early, about daybreak, when I was in bed with my wife in my house, which is in the lane of San Ambrosio in Pescaria, a water-carrier named Pompilio, who lives on the island, and a lady named Margherita, my wife's aunt, entered, and both told me that last night Cleria . . . had gone to prison with I know not how many other persons . . . [I arose] to inform my kinsman Antonio [Tollo], who lives with Signor Settimio de Cuppis. . . . I met the *sbirri* who asked me what my business was there, and I told them that I had come to speak to my kinsman, and they laid hold on me as also upon my servant Giovanni [1] and they have taken prisoner Antonio also."

Antonio had been arrested at dawn, as he was dressing to go to Poli or Frascati with Abate De Cuppis, for several of the women arrested had said that he had been seen on the island the previous evening, at compline, in the house of his sister, Cleria. Tollo had in fact gone there to take her some shirts, that she might make "collars" for them, and to withdraw some money which he had left in her keeping, to lend to Leone de' Massimi. He left at once, not staying to dine with her as was his custom. He told how the evening was spent; the testimony is interesting on account of the artists' names which occur in his narrative: "Last night I dined away from home, that is, I did not dine with the abate, but at the Osteria della Torretta, an inn kept by a certain Julia, in company with Antonio Tempesta,[2] Jacomo Borbona,[3] and Gismondo,[4] the German, who are painters, and Messer Zac-

[1] Giovanni di Brizio Colelli of Serra San Quirico.

[2] Born at Florence, 1555, died at Rome, 1630.

[3] Born at Novellara. The news of his presence at Rome in 1598 is new and precious. Our other information about his life has dealt with later years. See Thieme, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 335.

[4] Gismondo, or Sigismondo Laire, was born in Bavaria in 1553, and came to Rome during the papacy of Gregory XIII. He painted little, chiefly miniatures, and died in 1636. *Giovanni Baglioni Le*

caria, the Florentine Capolista.[1] At the twenty-first hour,[2] yesterday, we set forth in a carriage from the abate's home; that is, the abate, Messer Paradiso, his steward, the cavaliere Scarlati, Signor Domenico de Maximi and I. We went for a little jaunt about Rome, through the Corso from the Babuino, and then we returned home with the carriage, it might have been the twenty-third hour and a half; and when we were home, we all left the carriage. There we found Rutilio Gracco before the door of the Navoni house, reading a sonnet to Messer Asconio Paliaro, Navoni's lawyer."

So tragic and gloomy is the story we are relating that one lingers with all the more pleasure on any cheerful interlude. Such a one is afforded us by Marc' Antonio Valena's description of this Rutilio Gracco, in his unpublished diaries of Rome: "There was a Roman gentleman called Rutilio Gracco, who had been bewitched when a boy; he had not studied, yet he would discourse of the Sacred Scripture to outvie the theologians; having heard a sermon he could repeat it as though he were reading it. He let his hair grow long down his cheeks, he dyed it red and said he was Apollo. He used to wear three hats on his head; to gentlemen he would doff one, to prelates two, to cardinals all three; round the third one he wore a noose, and when he shook his head it would fall and hang between his shoulders. One day he met Father Carrettonio, a learned Jesuit, and began to question him concerning many passages out of Holy Scripture, and the father answered him eruditely; finally they came to the damned and the elect; Gracco asked him of which he hoped to be; 'By God's grace,' replied the priest, 'I hope to be of the elect'; whereat Gracco pulled from beneath his mantle a great radish and said to him, 'Turn around; let me implant this radish in you, for the Scripture says in Ecclesiasticus, chap. 24, *Et in electis meis mitte radi-*

vite dei pittori, scultori, ecc. (Naples, 1773), pp. 238-239. He is constantly mentioned in the records of the Confraternity "del Crocifisso," of which he was an official.

[1] The head of the official list of artists.—*Trans.*

[2] About three P. M.—*Trans.*

ces,' and went off laughing. The Jesuit went to speak to the Pope of this affront, but the Pontiff gave a great laugh, although he was a man rarely seen to be merry, and said, 'One must not dispute with madmen'; and thus the Jesuit returned home with two affronts, one from Gracco and another from the Pope himself."

To return to Tollo; he continued recalling other matters, such as summonses brought to the abate and to Ascanio. He then resumed, "I went in the direction of Sant' Ambrosio to find these painters, and I found Gismondo . . . ; I asked him the whereabouts of Antonio Tempesta and the other friends, and he replied, 'Let us go to his house after them.' So we went up to the little fountain of Sant' Ambrosio, where Antonio Tempesta lives, and I called, but he was not at home. Jacomo Borbone came up and said that Antonio was not there. And Jacomo, Sigismondo and I went to the inn, it might have been a half hour after nightfall. Then Antonio and Zaccaria arrived; and we went upstairs and dined." He then returned home, and after some talk with Abate De Cuppis, went to his own room. "I began to play the theorbo; I played for a time, and then I went to bed, and I did not arise again until this morning when the *sbirri* took me."

In those days even more than to-day it was considered a courtesy, nay, a duty, to warn persons suspected of crime so that they could flee from justice. Thus, just as Valerio of Poggibonsi had gone in all haste to warn Tollo, on the morning of the 13th, so Don Lancillotto and Nicola Imperiacci sped to the house of Paolo Bruno. But Paolo and the Spaniard had already taken flight.

Don Lancillotto said that as he stood at his window he heard passers-by speak of the murder of Cristoforo Cenci. At first he did not catch the name of the slayer; but when he left the house he learned that it had been Paolo. Signor Giulio Mattei likewise told him this. He then went to Paolo's house and told Donna Virginia Bruno what was being rumoured. She exclaimed: "I do not believe

a word of it! He has gone to Termine to sell some mares!"

To Paolo's house also came his cousin, Nicola Imperiacci. He had heard the story in the granary of San Crisogono next to the church; he ran to Piscinula, and met a miller, who said to him: "The square is packed with constables, and Marco Bello is there examining all those women, and I do not want to go home, for I do not want to be put in prison." He confirmed the statement that every one named Paolo as the culprit.

Don Lancillotto found in Paolo's house Pietro Piscicane; Pietro told him that Paolo was not there. They spoke of the event with the Moor, with the other servant, Girolamo, and with the coachman. These said they knew nothing about it because they were not "in the affair," but perhaps the Spaniard was mixed up in it. "This morning," they said, "he packed all the gear he had in the house and then he said to us, 'Farewell; last night the master and I were the cause of a little gossip. I'm off—with God's help!'"

The deputy prosecutor, Marco Bello,[1] learned that Imperiacci had spoken with some one about the occurrence and been seen entering the Bruno house. The following night he put Imperiacci under arrest together with his brother and his serving-boy, Mennico; he also arrested a Giovan Battista Bogiani who had been in the Trastevere with Imperiacci on the night of the crime.

Bello questioned many, and ordered a series of new arrests. Ovidio, the Chief Constable, filled the prisons with folk from the island and from Piscinula. These witnesses, wrangled and squabbled; they vamped up false testimony, made "revelations," openly boasted that they would lie to the judge. Meanwhile the two murderers had fled, and none pursued them.

We do not know where the Spaniard went after he bade farewell to his mates in the Bruno household; but we

[1] Possibly a descendant of Captain Marco Bello of Ascoli, who died November 3, 1580.

have an interesting bit of information about the flight of Paolo on the part of Rosato Carotoni di Cerchia, of the region of Celano. He saw Paolo the morning after the crime in the Roman Campagna; "he came all spent and panting on horseback, near the villa Cesis, which is his property, about six miles distant from Rome; and he met there Federico Còrso, his uncle, and all the time he wept, and they talked together, I know not what they said, but Paolo dismounted from off his horse, and Federico gave him a mare with saddle and bridle, she belonged indeed to Paolo; and he mounted the mare and turned in the direction of Tivoli. A little after up came Batista Còrso, cousin of Paolo, who had gone away, and a corporal who is called Mario de Praglia, who is also of Abruzzo. Federico told Batista that Paolo had gone off on horseback in the direction of Tivoli, and Batista went after him." He does not know where Paolo is, but he has "heard it said that he is in Abruzzo in a castle called Acano [Lanciano], whose governor is a son of Signor Pietro Pisciacane, called Signor Nicola; and if he were not there he might be found in another estate called Orsogna, which is also under the lordship of Signor Nicola Pisciacane, and is two or three miles away from Orsogna village."

We are to see later when and how Paolo received pardon and made his peace with Giacomo and Bernardo.

Little need be said of the trial itself, which ran its course between June 13th and 30th, as we have already constructed from the evidence given therein the elements of the story just related. Ottavio Pali sought above all to hide his own poltroonery; Bastiano Vicari denied, even under torture, that he had ever spoken to Cristoforo Cenci; Tollo tried to show himself a jealous guardian of his family's fair name; Cleria maintained that she had never seen nor known Paolo Bruno and added that Plautilla Scalabrini was a jade, a hussy and a slut; Plautilla in her turn proclaimed Cleria a whore and enriched the statement with salacious details; Flaminia declared that Paolo's procuress had been Dionora, not herself; Dionora at first denied, then admitted, that she had said a

few words at the urging of Flaminia, although Cleria had already perceived Paolo's intentions; Madonna Attilia, like Cleria, was not acquainted with Paolo, who had never set foot in her house; Bruno's guests said that after dining with him they had all returned home and had not strolled about the island; afterwards, however, they confessed the truth, and Meo Coneri stated for them all that they had agreed upon their story "in order not to get entangled in a mass of examinations."

It does not appear from the long judicial records that Giovanni Antonio of San Severino, husband of Cleria, the fatal beauty, was ever summoned to Rome. The prosecutor took pity on him and left him "at the port, fishing for sturgeon."

CHAPTER XII

THE BANDITS OF THE CICOLANO

Throughout June, 1598, troops of bandits from Cantalice and Spoleto were swarming into Cicolano and menacing Pendenza, Capradosso, La Petrella and Taglieto. It is easy to understand why they followed the course of the Salto, occasionally crossing the river to approach Turano. They clung to the frontier between the Papal States and the kingdom of Naples in order to take advantage of it when attacked by the soldiery of either power.

Banditry had attained a rank growth all over Italy, but especially in the states of the church and the kingdom of Naples. The activities of the viceroys against the bandit hordes did not always attain their purpose. This was largely due to the opposition of the Neapolitan nobles, whose influence extended even to the king of Spain. The judges did not always discharge their functions honestly and courageously. Some were weak, some vacillating, some corrupt; nor was the government always able to pursue the necessary course with energy. The protection of the feudal lords was largely to blame for the increase in the number and audacity of the robber bands. Not only could these repair to the castles and palazzi of the nobles when hard pressed, they were even in demand as instruments for the oppressive acts of their protectors. Hence organised and well-paid bodies of banditti had been formed; their leaders, one need hardly say, were criminals who had succeeded in escaping from justice in the great cities, fugitives, ruffians and ne'er-do-wells from the villages.

There were robber chiefs who were as much feared and respected as generals—Lodovico Orsini, for example, in the Roman provinces, and the priest Guercino, who styled

himself "King of the Campagna"; Alfonso Piccolomini in Tuscany; in the Romagna, Lamberto Malatesta; Curzietto or Curcieto di Sambuco and Marco Sciarro in the Cicolano district, where lay La Petrella.

The great effort undertaken by Sixtus V against this widespread and potent evil, which had become so deeply rooted and so generally supported that its extirpation almost defied the law, is matter of history. Bandits were not, at this time, considered common felons, but a sort of irregular soldiery of whose services nobles and sometimes even governments were not too proud to avail themselves. Except in rare cases their number and organisation overawed the peasantry, and took away any desire to assist the regular troops, who, incidentally, acted even worse than bandits in any territory they occupied.

Sixtus laid his plans with the prodigious energy that was a part of his stubborn character. He sought, first, an undertaking with neighbouring states which should put an end to the old practice of jumping frontiers when in danger, then set himself to hunt the bandits down within his own borders, destroying them like wild beasts and punishing all who gave them asylum. Guercino, the priest, was slain, Malatesta beheaded, Curzietto drowned, Giovanni Pepoli strangled, and possibly as many as ten thousand disposed of in one fashion or another. Alluding to those who were beheaded in the piazza before the Ponte Sant' Angelo, on the left bank of the Tiber, a diarist writes, in September 1585, "This year one might say that the heads lopped off at the bridge are almost thicker than the melons in the Banchi."[1] The singular means to which Sixtus resorted to combat the bandits are almost incredible. Nothing harassed them more than the lack of footgear as they tramped rough roads in bitter weather. Sixtus published, on January 13, 1586, a proclamation in which he called upon the people of the Sabine region to deliver up certain bandits alive or dead, and forbade the shoemakers to sell boots or shoes without the

1 Orbaan: La Roma di Sisto V negli "Avvisi"; in the Arch. della Soc. Rom. di Stor Pati, (Rome, 1910) XXXIII, p. 286.

permission of the authorities, in order to prevent the fugitives from obtaining a fresh supply.

Sixtus V restored peace and respect for the law within the Papal dominion; but it was an illusion of his own and of his biographers that the evil was done with. After his death it broke out in virulent fashion under Urban VII, Gregory XIV and Innocent IX; it found no further check until Celso Celsi and Flaminio Delfini drew up their strategic plan at the order of Clement VIII.

Paruta in his *Relazione dell' Ambasciata di Roma* (1595) tells us what the robber bands still were at the date when the Cenci were in the Abruzzi: "The severity of justice is still so great that it bereaves of life a great number of men, beyond what one may believe; since both the outlaws and their accomplices and their comforters are punished by the capital penalty when they fall into the hands of the law; and so many are there of this sort of folk that, one might say, few days go by but dead men's heads are seen borne forth, or bodies of executed men upon the bridge, four, six, ten, or twenty, or even thirty at a time. Thus the tale runs that from the last year of Sixtus V's pontificate to the present day, above five thousand men have died violent deaths, between those condemned by justice and those who have been violently done to death in divers manners by outlaws. Yet all this extreme rigour is not seen to have availed in the extirpation of those folk, but has rather hindered it. For when one only of those who may be in any manner whatsoever guilty of having been in the company of outlaws falls into the hands of justice, he gives occasion to many to flee into the country and make outlaws of themselves. For it being known that action is taken with the utmost severity against all, it befalls that these latter also fear that when some crime is discovered they may fall into suspicion of it or of having aided and comforted him who has committed it; so they themselves choose outlawry and join with the other outlaws and men of like business." As a result he notes, the bandits have reappeared in such numbers that if they moved in a body

Caprodosso

against Rome they would throw it "into the greatest confusion"; for this reason "they inspire much occasion for fear."

We have come to mid-June 1598. A certain Marzio di Giovanni of Fiamignano is returning with another countryman from Antrcdoco toward his own village. Before he reaches Pendenza, near Ara dei Sorci,[1] he perceives, scattered among the oaks, sprawling on the ground and gaming, a group of bandits, whom he knows to be from Cantalice. He notes among them "Olimpio Calvetti, castellan of the Petrella fort." He learns later that these men, upon coming into the district of La Petrella, had been "nourished and guided by this aforementioned Olimpio."

Cesare Venturini di Fiamignano, who heard the tale of this unwelcome encounter from his fellow-townsman, Marzio di Giovanni, adds that the large troop of bandits of Cantalice, among whom was the notorious Domenico Scutorosso, had united with another band from Spoleto; the leader of them all was Ciriaco of Spoleto.

Here is a very interesting and curious fact. Venturini was at Capradosso (it seems indeed that he was living there) when Giuliano di Marcantonio of Santa Lucia ("insula Sancti Agabiti") came to tell him that he was going to Rome to be a tailor; he had come to learn if Venturini had any messages for his kinsman, Messer Giuseppe, the doctor, who lived in Rome. As evening had come, Venturini kept Giuliano for the night at Capradosso. In the morning the guest was preparing to depart when "a great noise was raised that bandits were coming toward the town to enter into it." This was the band of Pietr' Angelo from Pietralta, a spot in the great Valle Castellana between Ascoli-Piceno and l'Amatrice. Men, women and children armed themselves as best they might with arquebuses, staves and stones, and posted themselves in defensive attitude upon the walls. Venturini and Giuliano did the same, none too soon, for the bandits were already in sight. When the marauders saw

[1] Rats' Altar.—*Trans.*

"the folk prepared in such wise, some of them began to come forward one by one, indicating that they wished to pass without doing any injury, and so in fact they did."

On their side the inhabitants of Capradosso made no offensive move, seeing the visitors in such great numbers, they feared lest, rousing them, "some mishap might occur."

The band had with them, as hostage, Don Giovan Paolo Corallo, priest of Offeio (a hamlet on the right bank of the Salto, between Capradosso and La Petrella, but at a lower level), together with Gian Battista of San Martino (below Capradosso), nephew of the bishop of Cittaducale. While the robbers were filing past, beneath the walls, where Giuliano and Venturini stood with the others, the pair noted that Olimpio was among their ranks. Venturini called to him: "Olimpio, brother, for my own life grant the life of yon priest to me; he is my kinsman." Olimpio replied to him "that he should have no fear . . . that he would treat with Pietr' Angelo and others of his friends, the bandits," so that "the priest would receive some mercy through his mediation. Thus they passed on toward Pendenza."

Maestro Giuliano relates another incident. Don Sisullo, priest of Taglieto, another hamlet below Fiamignano, had sent for him, telling him to bring his shears, as he wished to have a garment made. Maestro Giuliano obeyed; when he had come into the priest's house, he saw "a great quantity of armed men, who beset him round about and said to him, 'Maestro Argliano (Giuliano), make us some clothes!'" Olimpio then advanced and advised him to do their bidding, and this, in terror, he promised to do. He learned from Olimpio that among the band were Ciriaco of Spoleto, Papaleone, and Scutorusso. "I found within certain armed men with arquebuses, pistols and daggers, so that as for me I was so affrighted that I could hardly speak, and so one of them took me by the hand and said, "Maestro Giuliano, fear not; these are all friends of ours; and I have sent to call you here that you may make for them certain garments

which they require, and you may have for them what service you will besides your money.' And I, being as I have said, out of my wits and dumfounded, to me up came Olimpio Calvetti, the castellan, who was with these folk, and likewise armed with an arquebus, pistol and dagger, and he addressed me: 'Giuliano, you duffer, you seem afeared! Do you not see that these are my friends, and that for me they would give their lives a thousand times? Come on! serve them freely; you will be paid like a Count.' Then coming close to my ear, he said: 'Giuliano, you must keep friendly with these folk, as I do, to get your due.' Matters standing thus, he added these words: 'Do you imagine that we are nobodies? Yonder is Ciriaco of Spoleto'—and he pointed him out with his finger—'yonder Papaleone'; and thus he pointed out also Scutorusso and some other bandits of Cantalìce."

An order from "these folk" and from Olimpio was one to be obeyed. Fearing that they would slay him or at least beat him, Giuliano began to take the measures of the garments, and to cut them out. "Among others," he testified, "I cut out a jerkin of deerskin for the one whom they called Ciriaco; he made me measure and baste some imitation gold braid, and Olimpio pulled this braid out of his breeches pockets. And as it was then late, this Ciriaco and his mates, and Olimpio, too, kept saying that I should wait there to do my work and should carry nothing forth, and that if I needed anything in the way of braid or silk, I should inform Olimpio, who would obtain for me whatever was necessary, and to this end they gave a quantity of money to Olimpio; and so I continued the work in his presence until about the first hour of night, and I remained there thus long through fear that the bandits might return. And after a while, seeing that they did not return, I said to the man that I must go forth a little while to answer a bodily need, and he said, 'Go, but be quick because I wish to dine.' And so . . . seeing my chance, I made off toward Rome, journeying well-nigh all the night, through fear of those bandits, and there I remained until I heard the news

that this Ciriaco and his mates had come to a bad end."

In fact Carlo Gambacorta, marchese of Celenza Valfortore, Viceroy of Abruzzo, had been informed in Chieti of the fresh brigand raids, and had written, on June 24, 1598, to Domenico Antonio de Sanctis, his captain and representative: "Certain rumours are coming to our ears of outlaws in the mountains of Scanno Cucullo and about Cantalìce and Cìcoli; they go armed through the countryside, committing various crimes; since we cannot go there in person, you will kindly use all diligence to hunt down these folk and take them, dead or alive, and bring them to trial for their misdeeds, as we have confidence in you to do."

When Captain De Sanctis arrived in the Cícolano the bandits had scattered, returning to their dens in the mountains between the Turano and the Salto. As we have seen, a priest had given them refuge, Olimpio had been their guide; they were aided and protected because they were feared; and they were feared because of the weakness of the government.

No one thereafter disturbed Olimpio; he had fraternised with the bandits when they were in the Cícolano with the purpose, assuredly, of protecting La Petrella and the castle. Let us recall that he had murmured into the tailor's ear: "Giuliano, you must keep friendly with these folk, as do I." In any case, all he needed to insure immunity from official justice was to remind Captain De Sanctis that he was a vassal of Marzio Colonna.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONSPIRACIES

When Cristoforo had been buried in San Tommaso and the bandits dispersed from the Cícolano, Francesco Cenci's first action was to summon his two younger sons, Bernardo and Paolo, to his side.

The first, then seventeen years old, had left the school of Messer Americo Poderetti in March of the same year, and had gone to the Palazzo at Monte de' Cenci with Giacomo.

As soon as he arrived at La Petrella, his father told him flatly that he had sent for him intending that he should remain.[1]

Meanwhile the old servant Giorgio was sought throughout Rome. He was found and, to his own undoing, let himself be persuaded to return to La Petrella with the sole "office of steward." Finally Paolo also, the youngest of Francesco's sons, was removed from school and in his turn sent to La Petrella.[2]

While Cenci's sons were in the castle (it is Giorgio who supplies this detail) the father had them dine with

[1] It has been written that this was in the Spring, but Bernardo clearly affirms that "it was in the summer." There is further proof. Bernardo was still in Rome when Cristoforo was killed, on June 12th. On the other hand, when he and Paolo escaped from La Petrella, Olimpio was still living in the castle. Therefore their flight preceded August 9th. And since they remained there about one month (Bernardo once said twenty-five days) we are to assume that they were there for approximately the whole month of July.

[2] We can be certain of this order in the journeys to La Petrella: first Bernardo, then the servant Giorgio, finally Paolo. This contradicts the statement that has been made that the brothers went together. Bernardo said: "My brother Paolo came also, but he came after I had gone to stay there, being summoned also by my father." The servant Giorgio deposed that he had gone there at the same time as Bernardo and Paolo, but that Bernardo made the trip first, then the deponent, then Paolo. He added that it was in summer and that he remained at La Petrella for two months, until the death of Francesco; all of which confirms our statement in the preceding note.

him, and had Beatrice there also. None the less, no reconciliation took place and the father's fierce attitude toward them underwent no change. Habituated as they were to the life of Rome and the company of youths of their own age, Bernardo's and Paolo's sojourn irked them grievously; but their harsh parent contrived to increase its monotony, keeping them "under restraint" and seldom permitting them to disport themselves about the countryside. About a month after their arrival they contrived to escape. Olimpio aided them in their flight. He was probably only too glad to rid the castle of possible and dangerous witnesses to his relations with Beatrice. Giacomo declared: "My brothers told me that Olimpio had arranged their flight." And Catalano: "Olimpio was the cause of the departure of Signor Francesco's sons from the castle; he persuaded them to be gone." Further, "He found a guide for them"; this was Filippo di Evangelista, called Scocchino, whom we are soon to meet again. "I did not like my room," said Bernardo, "and I did not like the country. . . . Our father kept us shut up in the fort, and he would not let us go forth." And Giacomo: "Signor Francesco had kept these brothers of mine locked in and he did not permit them to speak with any one."

One evening toward the end of July Bernardo succeeded in persuading his father to let him go with Paolo the following morning early, to hunt on the neighbouring mountains "with an arquebus." He had said no word to his stepmother, who could not have failed to grieve at the departure of the boys and the consequent intensification of her solitude. Nor did they speak to Beatrice. Having obtained the keys (which he left behind when the gate was opened), Bernardo took from the stable one of his father's horses, and one which Olimpio had provided for him. He then sent Scocchino ahead to "spy out" the road, and set forth on his flight, taking his younger brother with him.

Francesco, who commonly rose late, did not learn of his sons' escape until between the fifteenth and sixteenth

San Rocca Seen from Santa Maria Della Petrella

hours (11 or 12 o'clock to-day). In a state of frenzied rage he swallowed a little food and set out on horseback to outstrip them. "He did not return until the following day; if I remember aright, it was night when he came back." So said Lucrezia; and Beatrice added: "He went after them forthwith, and he took to horse to follow them, but he could not overtake them."

When they had arrived in Rome, they immediately sought their brother in the family palazzo at the Monte de' Cenci. There they learned from Ludovica that on account of creditors' suits he had again gone into hiding in the rooms of Monsignor Guerra in the Cancelleria, under the unwitting protection of Cardinal Montalto. The brothers told him that they had fled, not being able to endure the life at La Petrella. Giacomo affirms that he remained in hiding only two or three days, adding: "this to the best of my belief."

Beatrice's first project for putting her father out of the way was to have him fall into the hands of the bandits by inducing him through "forged letters" from friends (her brothers were to write them) to leave the fortress on the ground that he was not in security there.

This singular idea must have been aroused in Beatrice's mind by the recent passage of the bandits through the region. It was certainly in July, 1598, that she propounded this plan, as is proved by the frequent reference to the presence of Bernardo and Paolo in La Petrella at the time. Marzio Catalano says further: "I do not know if Signor Bernardo also knew and had a hand in these matters, but he also was in the castle at that time."

A party of banditti were known to have their headquarters at Marcetelli, a settlement high on the slope of Monte Navegna between the Turano and the Salto and therefore on the frontier between the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples. It was an easy matter for them to swoop down from Marcetelli on the road by which one went from La Petrella to Rome, that is, in the neighbourhood of Poggio Vittiano or Vallecùpola. If these bandits

were informed of the day on which Francesco Cenci would pass that way, they could easily station themselves along this road, do their work, collect ransom and then murder their captive.

Catalano was notoriously on good terms with the banditti; and Olimpio and Beatrice worked with him to achieve their end. Beatrice, in her trial, attempted to allege that Olimpio first suggested this means of getting rid of Cenci; but the evidence points conclusively to her. Lucrezia herself, in a vivid phrase, tells us that her stepdaughter "had a very great purpose to try and kill her father," and adds: "She told me that Marzio Catalano was keeping the bandits hidden in Villa Martia to have Signor Francesco slain."

Catalano goes into the matter in great detail: "Signora Beatrice . . . strongly wished to get her father killed . . . and she said that in no wise would she any longer lead that strict life, and so she began to treat with Olimpio Calvetti for him to kill her father or have him killed. I know not if this lady had this design of herself alone at the beginning, for Olimpio lived in Petrella castle with his wife, and Signora Beatrice was there likewise, and they often spoke together; and this Olimpio began to talk to me . . . of wishing to get the Signor Francesco taken by bandits and held for ransom, and so get several thousand scudi; and after he had paid the money, to have him killed; and this was talked of with the knowledge and privity of Signora Beatrice, and they talked often together. Now because there were certain bandits of Marsitello (a castle of the Marrieri; that is, of Signor Marzio Marrieri) whom I knew and who were my friends and acquaintances, of whom one was named Lattantio, another Daniello and another nicknamed Scarapicchia (I do not remember his right name), and all these three came from Marcetelli . . . and two others also, one named Mozzono, who came from somewhere toward Aquila, and another, Giovan Bernardino, a kinsman also of this Mozzono . . . well then, Olimpio began to tell me that he wished me to treat with those bandits, to take

Signor Francesco, and that we would divide the ransom that would be given, and that we would be rich." Catalano, questioned at this point in his testimony, stated he had replied: "I do not want these riches; I do not want these ransoms!"; but added later: "Olimpio was continually urging me, saying that this was a good deed to do, and that it would make our fortunes, so I answered him and began to say that I would speak of it with these bandits."

Some days passed; pressed harder by Olimpio, he testified to having answered that "he was treating, speaking and dealing with the bandits and that he had talked with them;" but in truth (he continued) "I did nothing; and as time went on and nothing happened . . . Olimpio came to me and told me that it was necessary at all costs that I should busy myself to contrive that the bandits should take Signor Francesco, and then they would get a ransom for him and finally kill him." He thought that Paolo was in collusion with Olimpio because just then he and Bernardo "were in that castle called La Petrella"; or rather Olimpio gave him to understand he was privy to the plot. Olimpio returned to his theme: "that Beatrice also had told him that if he would get Signor Francesco taken by the bandits, and afterwards killed, she was willing to give all the money there was in the castle, and there was a good deal." As for Bernardo, the witness said: "I do not know if he knew of these things or had a hand in them."

Another dialogue took place between Beatrice and Catalano after the two brothers had gone. "Signora Beatrice," the witness testified, "sent for me to come and speak to her there from without the castle walls, under the battlements of the terrace,[1] and so I went there, and when I had come she leaned out at the battlements and said to me: 'I know that Olimpio has already spoken to you in my name, that you should seek to find some friend

[1] In that part of the fortress, as has already been said, which backs against the mountain where the battlemented wall of the terrace was least elevated above the path beneath.

of yours to get my father killed . . . because I will not longer live this life nor . . . remain longer shut up in this castle, and if you will bring this about I will be your debtor forever, and you may divide between yourself and Olimpio all the money and everything there is in the castle.' And she went on that there was a good quantity of money, besides ten golden rings and those chalices I spoke of . . . and a silver cross; and I promised her that I was willing to do it and was willing to go expressly and find those bandits, my friends, telling her that I had gone there other times and had not been able to find them, and I think that this was last July or August if I remember rightly."

The luckless Marzio was merely seeking in his depositions to attenuate his own guilt. It seems probable that in point of fact he did plot with the bandits of Marcetelli to hold Francesco Cenci for ransom, and was seeking to convince the court that he had merely feigned to fall in with Olimpio's and Beatrice's requests, but on the contrary had done nothing, and was therefore free of blame.

We do not know why this first project miscarried. It is quite possible that the bandits, before undertaking the perilous task, wanted a larger reward guaranteed to them than Beatrice could offer.

A few days later (on August 8th or 9th, to be precise) a serious and unexpected complication supervened. Olimpio Calvetti received an order from Marzio Colonna, which Francesco Cenci made no secret of having provoked, to leave the castle forthwith and take up his residence in the baronial palazzo of the Colonnas, near the east gate of the village. This brusque expulsion from the castle of its keeper caused many tongues to wag, and aroused much conjecture: this appears plainly from the trial. It can hardly have entered Francesco's mind that a plot was on foot to make away with him. Had this been so he would not have remained a single day longer under the castle roof. He would have fled from place to place, as

had happened in Rome, at the time he feared that Giacomo wished to poison him. He would at the very least have gone to lodge in the Capuchin monastery in La Petrella, as he did on various other occasions.[1] Yet his only action was to expel the castellan, who naturally took his family with him, and the object of Francesco's harsh action was precisely the man who, a little before, had been the only inmate in his good graces. Had some word or gesture, some exchange of glances in his presence between Olimpio and Beatrice, aroused suspicion in the father's breast? Was it for this reason that he hastened to tell Beatrice herself, exultantly, that Colonna had consented to the keeper's expulsion. Beatrice and Bernardo avoid any explanation of the episode. Lucrezia attempts one: "He wanted to leave us, his ladies, in the castle, and he did not desire any one should be there, for he wished to return to Rome and attend to his lawsuits." It is evident she wishes to have the court believe that her husband "was never angered with Olimpio, the castellan." But the trial reveals a quite different state of affairs. Giacomo tells us that Olimpio was enraged at his expulsion.

He did two things before leaving the castle. He took a short ladder, and by its aid pulled a longer ladder over the wall of the "wilderness"; standing this against the wall of the castle proper, he succeeded in re-opening the walled-up window of the prison underneath the balcony. He then lowered the ladder, laid it down and left it at the foot of the wall, where it was hidden in the tangled undergrowth of the court.

With the short ladder he would climb by night to the top of the wilderness wall; he would then pull up the ladder and let it down on the inside. Having concealed it, he would draw the longer ladder from the grass; by this means he would mount to the window; he would then pull up the ladder and leave it inside the prison, to be used later for his return. Thence he could pass into the "clois-

[1] Marzio Colonna also, on his visits to La Petrella, lodged with the Capuchins.

ter," and from the cloister to the castle cellar; from there to the battlemented terrace; "and from that terrace he would enter the rooms of the Signora Beatrice, through the kitchen; and Beatrice would open to him."

Not only did Olimpio reveal to Catalano the manner in which he came by night to Beatrice, but it was this course that Catalano, later, took with the keeper on their way to murder Francesco Cenci. Catalano says: "Signora Beatrice opened to him, and Olimpio told me that thus he was wont to go and talk to her about bringing this deed to pass." And when Olimpio told him how they could gain access to the castle and come to the very rooms of Beatrice, he had added: ". . . in the same way that I have gone there on other evenings."

This, then, had been the means of many a long and intimate conversation by night between the two lovers, or, if one wills, between the two conspirators.

Olimpio's expulsion from the castle had been so sudden that he had not been able to carry off various possessions of his. Besides these, there was a cellar full of his wine, and the "lower rooms" stocked with Marzio Colonna's grain, for the sale of which he was sometimes obliged to enter the castle. He therefore retained the keys to the lower rooms and the cellar. Plautilla also, more frequently than her husband, continued to go there with the full approval of Signor Francesco. Plautilla thus tells her story: "I often would return to the castle, for I went there to get the wine; and the first time that I returned there to the gate of the castle, a servant answered my call, saying: 'Who is there?' I told him that I was Plautilla and I wanted to get the wine. At this Signor Francesco himself appeared and opened to me straightway, saying to me that I was mistress . . . and so I went to do my business, to get certain things in Santi de Pompa's quarters . . . ; and I would come and go there constantly at my pleasure, and Signor Francesco ordered that the gate should always be opened to me; but whether Olimpio went there I do not know."

Olimpio and Beatrice, seeing "that nothing was to be done by means of the bandits," cast about for another means. Beatrice, by now beside herself, insisted the deed should be done quickly; she wished Olimpio to recall Marzio, who was with his mother (Cristina) mowing on the Montagna della Petrella. Aside from her longing to escape from her imprisonment, she was haunted by the fear that her father might perceive the ripening of new life within her and slay her. She gave no peace to Olimpio, now the slave of her will. She dominated him through their secret hours of pleasure, through her tenacity, by various lures, such as her promise to give a dowry of two thousand scudi to his daughter Vittoria, to adopt her and in time to arrange her marriage; she promised (so Olimpio informed Rosati) to make "a country squire of him"—no small incentive to one so vain. Beatrice herself, it may be added, finally admitted her promise to dower and marry Vittoria, after a partial denial to the judge.

Marzio came to her while Olimpio was at Aquila. She told him that she wished him to go to Rome on certain business, but that first it was needful to await Olimpio; then she judged it best that the latter should make the journey to Rome.

So frantic was her haste that Beatrice would not allow Olimpio to delay a moment at La Petrella after his return from Aquila, but insisted he should journey immediately to Rome to contrive some way with Giacomo for the slaying of their father. Olimpio told his wife that he was going to Zagarolo to see Marzio Colonna, and to take to the Signora Giulia some silk "which was of sixteen pounds weight." He set forth about August 25th [1] and was gone a week.

[1] This date can be fixed with sufficient precision; Bernardo and Paolo fled from La Petrella at the end of July, and Francesco was murdered on September 9th. Now Bernardo said that Olimpio came to Rome twenty or twenty-five days after he had fled from La Petrella, and Giacomo and Lucrezia testified that Olimpio's return was a fortnight before the father's death.

We possess the details of Olimpio's journey to Rome and of his agreements with Giacomo.

Olimpio arrived at Rome in the afternoon and came to the palazzo of Monte de' Cenci at a half hour past the twenty-first hour (a little before five, by modern reckoning). He was alone.

Bernardo and Paolo, who had been with him at La Petrella and had been aided by him in their escape, "ran to meet him with the utmost joy and covered him with caresses." So said Giacomo, who till then had not met him; nor did Bernardo contradict him. Olimpio was not lodged in the house, but he was kept to dinner, and the talk was prolonged for an hour and a half in the upper loggia of the little court; though walled up and altered, it is still visible to-day. It is that loggia, of which we have already spoken, which was then adorned with paintings of panoramic views of Rome, Milan, Venice and Genoa, painted perhaps by Antonio Danti, who had made such things the fashion of the moment in Rome. The following morning Olimpio returned; he remained a like time, and had a meal in the lower loggia of the same court, beneath the upper loggia just mentioned, and beside a cistern. The three brothers, Giacomo, Bernardo, and Paolo kept Olimpio company at both his meals, without, however, seating him at their table. Yet in the morning all drank together; it was the tragic toast, pledged to all that had been plotted between Olimpio and Giacomo, in the presence of the boys, Bernardo and Paolo, even though their consent was neither asked nor obtained. Something of the pact came to light in the trial. Olimpio described to the brothers Beatrice's cruel existence, and Francesco's evil dealings with himself, which had culminated in his provoking Marzio Colonna to remove him from the castle. And if he, Olimpio, meant to "pick the flies off his nose," [1] Beatrice was no less resolute in wishing her father's death.

Giacomo asked nothing better. His hatred of his father, which had already provoked him to dreadful

[1] To get rid of an obnoxious person.—*Trans.*

threats if not to deeds, found an aliment in the hatred of Beatrice and Olimpio. He advised the latter to do "the business" thoroughly since Francesco had "as many lives as a cat."

They then reached an agreement concerning Vittoria's dowry of two thousand scudi and the other promises made by Beatrice, which there seemed no reason to refuse. Olimpio revealed this fact later to his brother, Fra Pietro. Giacomo and Beatrice admitted it later.

The most important point to be settled was the manner of Francesco's death, and poisoning was decided on. When Olimpio returned to La Petrella he returned provided with opium and a poison. Immediately on his arrival he showed the drugs to Catalano and Beatrice, saying he had them from Giacomo. Upon his trial Giacomo denied this. He asserted that the poison had been purchased by Olimpio and shown to him afterwards. The opium was in the form of a small reddish-yellow pellet: the poison was a reddish root, perhaps atropa mandragora or atropa belladonna.

Giacomo thus relates his story: "Olimpio told us that he had bought some opium, and to us, Bernardo, Paolo and myself, he showed a small lump which was somewhat yellowish or reddish; it was a lump no bigger than a small fingernail, and he said he had bought it to give to Beatrice, and that Beatrice would know what to do with it, and she would serve it up to our father; and he told us it was opium; and he showed us also a reddish root which was a half-finger long, and he told me that he had had it from a chemist who served the Cardinal Marcantonio Colonna, and he said that this fellow was his great friend, and he told us that this root was a most perfect poison; and the opium he told us he had bought for three or four pence from an apothecary through the aid of that chemist, and he said that were it not for that chemist, he could not have got it, for he had tried to buy it from many apothecaries, but could never get it."

On the contrary, Beatrice testified: "Then Olimpio went to Rome and returned to La Petrella . . . and he

gave me a lump of red stuff as big as one's nail, but round, and I said to him, 'What is this?' and he answered me: 'Signor Giacomo gave me this and bids you put it in the wine, and you should dissolve it first in other wine or in water before you put it in the cup.' For it was to be drunk, and one would dissolve it by stirring it about with the finger in a dish or in the bowl before being put in the bottle; and Olimpio said it was opium."

Olimpio also showed the "red root" to Marzio Catalano, again saying that Giacomo had given it to him, together with a dose of opium. It is true that Marzio added that the latter was in a vial or flask or cruet; but he also said that he did not see the opium, Olimpio having left it at home.

Our own opinion is that it was Giacomo who procured the opium and the poison and delivered them to Olimpio, for the simple reason that Olimpio was acting at Beatrice's bidding; and she appears never to have chosen nor advised that method. Certainly also, Olimpio let himself be persuaded by Giacomo, that poison would be the safest means of killing, without any struggle, which would be perilous in the case of a man like Francesco Cenci, and without bloodshed; therefore having more "the appearance of natural death."

But when Olimpio had returned to the castle (September 1st or 2d) and spoke with Beatrice, she dismissed any possibility that her father could be put out of the way by poison. Francesco had again been seized by the most acute suspicion; he no longer touched food and drink unless Beatrice tasted it first and thus "gave it credit" in the phrase of the day. "He was a very suspicious man," so ran a deposition, "and he put no trust in any man; he desired his daughter to give credit when he ate, and would say: 'Beatricciola, give it credit'; and he made her give credit both to the food and the drink."

Beatrice asserted that her father made Lucrezia also "give credit"; and the latter certainly did not confute the assertion when she said in her perplexity: "It may be that Signor Francesco gave me to eat of what he himself ate,

Stony Mountain and Ruins of La Petrella

but I had no part in such tricks." However, it was a trick which she had realised some time before, as she herself confessed and as we already know: "Francesco here in Rome had himself served by the wife of messer Domenico Stella . . . and also while we were in the house of Signor Emilio della Morea he had as cook Lavinia, his daughter, wife of the same Signor Emilio."

But the most damning admission was made by Marzio Catalano: "Signora Beatrice and Olimpio despaired, because the Signora Beatrice had told him that Signor Francesco could not be poisoned . . . since he did not trust and would not taste any food or drink if first Beatrice did not taste it; and therefore she feared that if she brought him any poisoned food or draught she too would be poisoned; and therefore Olimpio and Beatrice began to think of taking another way to kill Signor Francesco, and he said to me: 'Since this way of poison does not succeed, I desire that we kill him as best we can.'" Beatrice also said to Catalano: "We will arrange the business this way; we will make it look as though he had had a fall; and no one will ever know any better."

Did this idea originate with Beatrice? Or was it an unconscious return to her mind of something she had once read or heard told?

In the second half of the sixteenth century great popularity had been accorded to the hundred tales of Cinzio Giraldi, entitled *Hecatommithi.* Now in the tale of Disdemona (which Shakespeare later took as the theme of his Othello), the standard-bearer suggests to the Moor: "When she is dead, we will pull down part of the ceiling, and we will break in the lady's skull, giving out that a beam has broken it and killed her in its fall; and in this wise there shall be none who may put any suspicion upon us, deeming that her death has befallen by chance." [1]

Finally the sinister design of Beatrice and Olimpio took shape. It was to kill Cenci in his bed under a rain of

[1] Part I, decade III, the seventh novella.

blows, to break open a part of the balcony flooring, to drop the body through and let it fall into the "wilderness"; then to give out the tale that the decayed wooden balcony had broken under his feet, and that "the marks on his body had been caused by the fall of the balcony."

As their project was designed so it was executed. However, the execution was bad.

Olimpio, fearful lest the garrulous and scant-witted Catalano should divulge the secret, did not desire him as an accomplice; but the two women insisted, for two reasons: first, they feared that Olimpio alone would not succeed in his attempt; second, Catalano, who was already acquainted with the purposes of Beatrice and Olimpio, would be less ready to speak if he were directly implicated in the crime.

Olimpio surrendered to these arguments; he spoke to Catalano, on the one hand menacing him with death if he should breathe a word, on the other making him the most extravagant promises. Catalano was not to forget that the castle was stuffed with money and valuable objects, of which he would receive a large share, so that he would have his bread assured him for the rest of his days and could give a good dowry to his daughter.

Catalano insisted to the judge that he had attempted to dissuade both Olimpio and Beatrice from committing the crime, saying that the matter was especially serious because Francesco was in the house of Marzio Colonna. He deposed further that when he had spoken to Beatrice of the enormity of the sin of parricide, she had replied: "That is between myself and God and no other!"

In any case, Marzio, for all his good advice, agreed to participate in the crime!

During the last few days Francesco had been fiercely attacked by gout and kept his bed almost continuously. Plautilla saw him in his bed "eight or nine days before" his death; she had come to see the two women. Beatrice had this to say: "He was ill . . . for some days . . . before his death. Sometimes he would rise from bed; sometimes a hand pained him, sometimes a foot." In

Lucrezia's words: "He remained very often in bed, and once he had cast himself on his bed he would not rise at all until the twenty-second hour (5 P. M.) according to what he had to do, whether more or less."

About the end of August he wrote to Rome that two young and nimble menservants should be dispatched to him. Santi de Pompa had taken himself off; Giorgio, the Venetian, had indeed returned, but he was too old. Francesco needed servants who would not only do the housework, but who could make constant and speedy trips from the stronghold to the village, and who could easily journey to Rome and Aquila.

Maestro Gerardo, the tailor, procured for him a boy named Michele Annunzio or Annunziato, nicknamed Paino,[1] from Lorraine. Messer Domenico Stella, Francesco's notary, arranged to dispatch Paino to La Petrella; he sent with him Girolamo, another "young fellow," tall, thin, and dark, whose beard was just beginning to grow. The arrival of these newcomers at the castle at such a crisis must have been most unwelcome to Olimpio and Beatrice; but Cenci, as though already the prey of destiny, himself arranged to remove them from the scene. Paino and Girolamo left Rome on September 4th, and arrived at the castle on the 5th. Cenci forthwith sent back Paino to Rome on the following day with a letter for Stella, and on the 8th sent Girolamo to Aquilo, whence he did not return until the 9th, when the crime had already been committed. Further, Sartorio, of La Petrella, another of Cenci's servants, had gone to the Cícolano to search for or to hire a serving-maid. There was now only left old Giorgio, whose room was below, at the castle gate.

At the third hour of night (10 P. M.), Sunday, September 6th, Olimpio and Marzio drew their scaling-ladder from the bushes beneath the castle. Olimpio had obtained it from one Lucia de Penzaccona of La Petrella and kept it hidden by the castle wall, making use of it, as we know,

[1] "The dandy."—*Trans.*

for his visits to Beatrice. By means of it the pair climbed to the top of the wall of the "wilderness" or "rabbit-warren"; when they had both bestridden the wall, they drew up the ladder and let it down into the weedy court, and there descended. But let Marzio tell his story: "Then we took that other long ladder which we found hidden in the weeds as Olimpio had said, and we leaned it against the window above the warren, carrying the other little ladder with us also, then we pulled up the long ladder which we had leaned against the wall, by which we had climbed up, and we put it inside that first room we came to, which was called the Prison, to hide it there so that we could use it when we wanted to issue forth after we had done what we were come for, which was to kill Signor Francesco; and though the little ladder did not reach to the window, we pulled it up by hand . . . [1] and from that prison-room we passed on to the cellar of the cloister, and then we came out by the window of that cellar to the piazza within the castle."

The accomplices then entered the rooms formerly occupied by Santi de Pompa; Olimpio had a key to them. "Afterwards, Olimpio and I went on to the rooms of Signora Beatrice, who was there waiting." There was more talk of what was to be done. She would give her father the opium to put him to sleep, and the men would kill him as he slept. "And this resolve being made, Signora Beatrice gave me a tallow candle without a candlestick, and she put it alight into my hand; we were in the first room which looks out on the piazza; then we both went out. . . . And Signora Beatrice remained in her bedroom, and Olimpio and I went to Santi de Pompa's room, which we had entered already. . . . And there Olimpio talked with me, perhaps less than a quarter of an hour. . . . And he went out and returned to Signora Beatrice's room . . . Olimpio told me this in the morn-

[1] The dots represent repetitions of the same statements or the same words, frequent in the testimonies of all the witnesses, especially so in Marzio's case.

ing when he came back to me . . . but I saw him go out as well . . . and he said that he had slept the night beside the fire, and that same Sunday night I slept . . . on two tables . . . to which there are no benches, and I had a covering which Olimpio brought me from Signora Beatrice's room, it was a white blanket, which I had that night to cover me; and so when morning came of Monday (September 7th) Olimpio and I were still in that room of Santi's, where we conversed until midday without going out at all again, and keeping the door locked; and when meal time came, Signora Beatrice brought us food, and handed it to us at the door of that room, and handed it to Olimpio in my presence, and what she brought to eat I do not remember, but it seems to me it was bread, meat and wine, and she brought it on a plate wrapped up in a napkin, and after she had handed us the food, she went off to her own room; and Olimpio and I ate standing up in the room where we were; we had the door shut. . . . I do not remember whether it was locked or whether we pushed against it a carronade which was in there."

Two hours later Beatrice returned. Bewildered, but irritated too, she told the men "that she had given the opium to her father in his wine, and she said she had put it in the bottle; it was indeed true, she said, that he had drunk but little because it seemed to him bitter, and at first he had . . . taken a sip or two; she also said that the opium had at first confused her father a little, but it had not made him sleep as she expected, and so she asked us what we wanted done. Olimpio replied: 'This evening we will make up our minds.' Beatrice returned to her own room, and she told us that her father was lying outside the bed."

Beatrice and Lucrezia then give their versions of the episode. The first confessed: "I dissolved the opium in a cup, and Signora Lucrezia was still present when I dissolved it, and we put in the wine-bottle, and I gave it to my father to drink . . . and since Olimpio had told me . . . that it would not cause death, I tasted some of it

also, for my father wished me to drink of it when he saw that the wine was so muddy."

Lucrezia goes into greater detail. She was present (as we have seen) "when Beatrice dissolved the opium in a little cup," by pressing it down with her finger. Then Beatrice had put it in the wine, shaking the bottle, and had herself poured the wine into her father's wine-glass. He had tasted it and "exclaimed: 'Oh, Beatrice, how does it happen that this wine is so muddy?' Beatrice replied that there were some sort of leaves in the water and that the mud must have come from the water. Signor Francesco then called the servant, I think it was Sartorio,[1] and said to him, 'Why are you not more careful about the water? There have been some leaves in it and they have muddied it.' So he believed what Beatrice had told him." Lucrezia would have it into the bargain that she too had tasted the cloudy wine.

Beatrice appeared a second time in Santi de Pompa's quarters. She was now in great agitation; she said that she had seen Plautilla "coming along the road below the castle." Olimpio could not restrain himself; he went forth on the piazza and indeed saw his wife, who was sitting [says Marzio] "beyond the castle vineyard on the road which goes toward the Mountain, above the almond-trees; and from that place where she was sitting she could see the door of the room where Olimpio and I were; and Olimpio then signalled to Plautilla to be off, threatening her with his finger that he would give her a good lesson, but he did not speak; and thus Plautilla remained there for a little and then went off; and a little while later Olimpio went out of that room and entered that of Signora Beatrice; and from there he went forth again out of the castle by the ordinary door; the ladies slipped him out, but how they managed I know not." Beatrice confirmed the fact, saying: "Plautilla came up above the castle vineyard, and later also to the road that goes to

[1] Sartorio had apparently gone to Cicolano (see p. 173). The author takes no notice of the discrepancy, perhaps because it is contained in evidence so much of which was perjury.—*Trans.*

the mountain; and she kept looking at the castle; and Olimpio saw her, and I saw he had perceived her; and a little later Olimpio went out through the gate, saying, 'I want to go down home for a while.' "

But Plautilla herself gave the most telling testimony, a tale abounding both in emotion and in facts. The unhappy woman was not unaware that her husband was having intimate relations with Beatrice; now she realised that the pair were plotting some serious affair. "Seeing that my husband had not returned to sleep at home . . . and seeing that in the morning he had not returned home for the midday meal, I began to harbour a thousand suspicions; and since I used often to see Olimpio, while we were in the castle, talking confidentially with Signora Beatrice and sometimes with Signora Lucrezia too, and I always tried to keep behind some door . . . to hear what they were saying, and since I knew that Signor Francesco was sick, I suspected that Olimpio was in the castle secretly, and I had many suspicions in my head; I resolved to go to a high place wherefrom one could see the castle, covertly and secretly as far as possible to discover if I could see Olimpio; and so I went there about midday,[1] and I hid behind some almond-trees to see if Olimpio was in the castle and if he had gone out, I mean if I could see him go out, for from there one could see the great gate of the castle; and since I did not see Olimpio come forth at all, I went higher up along the road which goes toward the Mountain, and I leaned against a great rock from which one can see the whole piazza of the castle and also the door of the room where Santi de Pompa used to lodge; one could see likewise a door of an antechamber where Signora Beatrice slept; and I was standing there looking to see if Olimpio was in the castle and if I could see him in any wise, and I was standing so, leaning with my back against that rock; and being visible from the castle, they perceived me, and I saw Olimpio in Santi de Pompa's room, I mean in the doorway . . . and he

[1] It was later. In fact she said she was disturbed by not having seen Olimpio return for the midday meal.

was threatening me with his finger; I could see him very well; he was wearing a great-coat and yellow sleeves; and seeing this I got up, but you may well think how unwillingly, having seen Olimpio in the castle; and then I went home, and straight I cast myself all dressed upon the bed, for grief of having seen Olimpio in that place, and I pulled the bed-curtains about me; and not long after, I being thus on my bed, I heard Olimpio come in. His face was like a lion's, and he went about seeking me through the house, and came toward the bed where I lay; he opened the bed-curtains and began to say to me . . . 'Did you think I was lost, that you went seeking me? Do you want to be the death of me?' And he put his hands to my throat, giving me many blows on the body, saying to me that he wished to kill me; and I said: 'Ohimè! Ohimè!' and so he left me and ran forth and went about the village; and afterwards he returned thence for a time, but he did not speak; and the same evening I bade him Godspeed."

It is not with any Godspeed, it is with the speed of the devil that Olimpio climbs the steep ascent to the castle. It is the hour prearranged with Beatrice (the second hour of night). She has ordered Catalano to let down the ladders concealed in the prison, to afford her lover access. Afterwards he will say that "he had shown himself in the village, so that later, when no one had seen him for two days, no suspicion might arise in his regard."

While Olimpio was absent, Lucrezia went (at the urging of Beatrice, she says), to bear Marzio Catalano company for a little time. He had now been for some hours alone in Santi de Pompa's rooms. Lucrezia, it may be noted, was familiar with them. Her husband, making a tour of the castle with Beatrice and herself after Santi had fled, had taken the two women through them.

Catalano and Lucrezia both affirmed, in the course of the trial, that what they spoke of together was whether or not it were best to murder Francesco, and that they had agreed in the desire that the attempt should be abandoned. We believe the statements to be true, not

so much because Lucrezia and Marzio, gaoled and interrogated in two separate and distant cells, made this deposition each without the other's knowledge, as because such an idea corresponds to their hesitating and passive characters. Beatrice's was a resolute soul, so far mistress of the spirits of others as to bend them to her will. No one seems to have dreamed of opposing her, neither her brothers at Rome, nor Olimpio, Marzio and Lucrezia at La Petrella. It is not likely that even Olimpio would have murdered Cenci had he not been driven to the deed by his passion for her, sensual as it was, and by her overmastering will. Lucrezia, indeed, recalled that Olimpio had said to her: "Signora, I must do it at all costs because I have promised."

Catalano confessed that Lucrezia said to him, in the dialogue to which reference has just been made: "This murder must not go on: it is a great sin!" He affirms that he himself added: "They have led me on to this, and I would be glad indeed if it ended here." Thus Catalano: as for Lucrezia: "In the talk I had with Marzio I begged him that he and Olimpio should not do murder, because it was a great sin, and Marzio said to me, 'Signora Beatrice and Olimpio have told me that there is much money in this castle,' and I said, 'It is not true, and they have deceived you,' and, because he saw that I was weeping Marzio told me that he was quite willing to entreat Olimpio not to do the deed, and that he was far from desiring it himself, and so I went back to the master."

It is needless to add that any such proposals were scattered like chaff before Beatrice's will and Olimpio's resolution.

In fact, when Olimpio had re-entered the castle with Catalano's aid, and the plotting began again, with both of them now in Beatrice's room, it is doubtful whether Marzio dared to speak at all. Beatrice told them that after her father had drunk the opium and had gone to bed (and she had remained a long time at the bedside) he "seemed stunned" and had not risen again. Lucrezia had lain down gently by his side. They parted, agreeing

that the deed should be accomplished the following morning (Tuesday, September 8).

Beatrice gave them a taper and sent them back to Santi de Pompa's room: but Olimpio "returned to Signora Beatrice's chamber," where he passed the night!

Dawn was breaking when Olimpio re-entered the room where Marzio was awaiting him; he called him and told him that the hour had arrived "to do the deed." Marzio rose from the floor on which he was lying and strove to collect his wits.

Olimpio had a "Lombard hammer" (with two faces, one flat, one pointed); Marzio had "a wooden rolling-pin used to make *lasagne* and macaroni." "It was bright daylight" when they entered Beatrice's room; they were starting with her toward Francesco's room when they encountered Lucrezia, "just at the door of the room where Beatrice slept." She was advancing half dressed with a chamber-pot in her hand; a vulgar pretext to be used to explain her departure in case her husband should awake. Timidly but urgently, she conjured them not to commit the crime at that time. It was the day of the Assumption, one of the greatest feasts of the Church. A festive pealing of bells indeed reached their ears from the two churches of La Petrella and the Capuchins, and from Staffoli and Cerreto, farther away. Lucrezia said: "Have respect for the Madonna for to-day . . . perhaps the Madonna will show some great miracle." The wicked trio halted and turned back in silence. Lucrezia followed them, and when they were a good distance from Francesco's bed-chamber, "in a room beyond the kitchen," she confessed that if Olimpio and Marzio had entered the evening before when she was in bed with her husband "she would have died of fright." Humbly she added that it seemed best to her to do no more about it. Catalano remarks: "Beatrice did not hear this speech of her stepmother, and it is just as well: if she had heard it she would have eaten her alive; she would not have liked it because she meant the thing to be done at all costs; you

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see this Beatrice wished him to be killed, come what might."

Marzio re-entered Santi de Pompa's rooms, where Olimpio rejoined him after a time; together they barricaded the door. Olimpio then said "resolutely" that the deed was to be done that evening.

At lunch-time Beatrice brought them food: bread, meat and wine, as the day before. "She brought the wine," said Catalano, "in a bottle, without any tumblers. We drank out of the bottle; it was a flask bound with osier . . . we ate standing up as before."

Beatrice returned in the afternoon to see them, but Lucrezia did not appear. Meanwhile Francesco had risen, though feeling still dizzy, but could not remain long on his feet. He ate little, and then returned to bed. Some time passed; Olimpio and Catalano left their hiding-place and went to Beatrice's room. They found her alone, awaiting them; but when they were about to go to Francesco's room, Olimpio was seized with a fit of coughing which he could not repress. In order not to be heard—as might well occur in the silence of the castle—"he retired to the piazza . . . and did his best to stifle his cough . . . so that it lasted all the longer . . . and it lasted some time." So says Marzio; he went further and declared that Olimpio had commanded him: "'Go, see the Signora, give any excuse you like, but say it cannot be done.' And I went and told Signora Beatrice, who was much out of humour, that this cough had seized Olimpio and that he might have been overheard in his going there, and I said that it would be a good thing if we did nothing more. Then Signora Beatrice said that this was just a trick of his and that he had made his cough come on purpose."

A terrible scene ensued. Beatrice, in her turn, went out on the piazza and began to cover Olimpio with insults, telling him she was weary of being played with, reproaching him with cowardice, and saying that he might make up his mind never to see her again. In her fury dangerous words slipped out; nor was Olimpio more cau-

tious. "Blaspheming the name of God" and forgetful of himself, he began, in the presence of Marzio, to address her with that "thou" which he should have kept for their most intimate moments [1]: "Thou dost wish to make me do what I cannot do; yet if thou dost wish that I go to Hell, there I will go!"

This scene seems to have slipped Olimpio's memory subsequently. Four months later, he told Camillo Rosati, dolefully enough, that, "he outfaced and threatened her [Beatrice], telling her that she was his deadliest enemy, and that he knew well his ruin began the day he had first seen and known her."

Humiliated and furious, Olimpio once more took the oft-trodden course through cellar, cloister and prison, descended into the weed-choked court by means of his two ladders, and climbed its wall. Catalano followed at his heels. They left the short ladder of Lucia de Penzaconna "at the head of the village," in "a place that is called li Jufilli" and in "a stable wherein there is a hole that opens on the fields." Then, taking each an end of the long ladder, they carried it "to the palazzo of Signor Marzio, where Olimpio lodged . . . resolved to have done with this business."

In fact, the removal of the two ladders (especially of the long one to the baronial palazzo at the eastern gate of the village and quite far away from the castle) suggests that Olimpio, angry and indignant, had indeed made up his mind to have no more to do either with the crime or with his haughty mistress. But during the night, as so often happens after a quarrel, his passion assailed him more strongly than ever and overcame his sober judgment. Olimpio and Marzio lay in their own houses. To the former, at least, the hours must have seemed an eternity of torture.

Catalano's testimony is substantiated by that of his wife, Porzia, and by Plautilla. The poor women perhaps felt reassured by the return of their husbands. Said

[1] In English this distinction between the language of ceremony and intimacy has long been abandoned.—*Trans.*

Porzia: "My man came home by night on the evening of Mary's Day in September . . . and he slept with me . . . he did not eat with me, for he told me he had eaten . . . and that he had been away from La Petrella." And Plautilla says: "In the evening (of September 8) Olimpio came home by night . . . and he slept in my house in La Petrella, in the palazzo of Signor Marzio, where we lodged, and in the same bed"; and "when he returned I asked him where he had been, because I suffered for not having seen him come home by day or night, either to eat or sleep, and he replied to me: 'I have been on an errand to get a mare of Signor Marzio.'"

One thing was henceforth impossible to Olimpio—to deliver himself from the fascination and the iron will of Beatrice.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PARRICIDE

During the night hours Olimpio has made up his mind. Rather than lose his mistress he will commit murder.

At four in the morning he rose from bed, dressed, and came downstairs. Plautilla, who was also about to arise in order to comb her flax, heard her husband open the stable door, take out the mare, lead her to the near-by gate of La Petrella and let her out to pasture. She heard his steps grow fainter and fainter; sadly she began her lonely task.

It was about half-past four by modern reckoning[1] when Olimpio knocked at the door of Marzio's house and called him. Porzia heard him and awoke her husband, who was sleeping deeply, his soul at peace since he "had not been forced to do any more." "He told me," said Porzia, "to get up and see who it was, for we were in bed. I got up and asked who it was; some one replied from without: 'Is Marzio there?' I recognised the voice as Olimpio's . . . , and I went to tell my husband that Olimpio was there . . . Marzio got up in his shirt and went to the door and spoke with Olimpio; he came back to dress himself and made to go out; and I said to him: 'Where do you want to go?' He answered: 'I want to go out for a little'; and he went away with Olimpio."

Hardly were the pair outside when Olimpio said to him: "I am resolved to do this deed, to kill Francesco Cenci." The other began to recapitulate his usual objections, sound ones, but hesitatingly offered. Among other things, he remarked that it would soon be day.

[1] Marzio said: "An hour before day; the ninth hour had rung"; and, in two other examinations: "About half an hour before day." Also Porzia, Marzio's wife, saying it was between the ninth and tenth hour, places the time at about half-past four.

Olimpio merely hurried him on toward the Colonna palazzo, and told him to remain outside to receive the long ladder which he would let down from the wall. "So I made the trip," Marzio recounts, "and I went out of the door and went right to where the ladder should be, and as I did not perceive it, Olimpio came and found it, and we hid it together in some gardens, and afterwards we went to get the little ladder from the stable, and we came in again through the window in the castle by the way we had taken the other times, and we arrived at Signora Beatrice's rooms when it was grown dawn [about 5.30 A.M.] and we knocked very softly." No agreement having been made for that hour, Beatrice took some time to open the door. She was in bed and obliged first to put on her clothes. "When she had opened, we entered in, and Olimpio said: 'Well! we have made up our minds to do it' . . . and we talked for a while . . . with her, about the way we were to use . . . and it was settled that Signor Francesco should be killed in his bed, for Olimpio said that he wished to catch him unawares, knowing well the bed and the rooms, and to put one hand to his throat, and with the other hand beat him on the head with the hammer, which was the one that he had carried before on the other days when we had gone to do the deed; the hammer was headed on one face to break stones, and on the other face it was pointed; and if Signor Francesco tried to rise up or resist, I was to have at him with the rolling-pin, which I had also had the other times, as I have said; it came from the castle, that is, it belonged to Signor Francesco, and Signora Beatrice had given it to me."

By this time it was full daylight, though dark clouds covered the sky. "It was gloomy weather," Lucrezia recalled. Beatrice went first to the painted hall, took the keys of the castle from their recess, and tossed them to Giorgio, ordering him to open the outer door, and when the doors were swung out to be off to his marketing; these were his regular duties in the early hours of the day. She then remounted the stairs, and in company with

Olimpio and Marzio went to her father's room, pausing in the antechamber until Lucrezia should open the inner door, "because one could not enter in saving it were opened." When Lucrezia appeared, they did not wait for her to begin her customary difficulties and objections; all three burst in. While Olimpio, who knew the room well, advanced toward the bed, Beatrice went to open the window "so that we might see what was being done, for so we had arranged beforehand." The noise awoke Cenci with a start; raising himself up a little in bed, he succeeded in saying: "Hola! what is all this?" But Olimpio was already upon him. Resting his whole weight upon the victim's breast with his left hand, with his right he showered blow after blow on the head, not only with the flat head of the hammer, but also with its pointed face, inflicting a number of deeply incised wounds. Marzio meanwhile with his rolling-pin beat with all his force on the victim's shins to prevent him struggling to his feet. The violence was so great that Lucrezia, remaining in the antechamber, and Beatrice, who had taken refuge in her own room immediately after opening the window, heard the blows; but they did not hear their prey utter a single cry or groan. As Olimpio puts it in his story to Rosati, "he had not even time to say 'Jesu!'"

Their horrible task accomplished, the two assassins, without exchanging another word, sought the women. They found Lucrezia first, paralysed with terror, then, in the other room, Beatrice: they said to both: "It is all over!" Thence they passed to the balcony: after having scoured the country on every hand, and finding it deserted, they took counsel as to how and where the paling should be broken down. Olimpio delivered a kick at the parapet, "as high as a man's waist," hoping to "make it appear that Francesco had fallen" by leaning against it: but, says Marzio: "Our sin, or the devil, willed it that the parapet could not be broken down except on one side . . . where it could be seen from the road that leads to the mountain, and as Olimpio did not succeed in this manner, he began to break up the tiles and planks of the

flooring beneath." At first he made a hole "to make it seem likely that Francesco had fallen through," but as it could not be made sufficiently large to admit the passage of Cenci's bulky body, "he widened a hole not very far from the first one, where refuse was thrown out, and he made it big enough for the body to pass through."

During the half-hour spent on the balcony in this feverish occupation, the body was left on the bed, where it made an incredibly great pool of blood. "It was ruin!" Marzio exclaimed to the judge, his terror renewed at the thought. "The blood ran all over the mattresses and the blankets, and spotted and bloodied all the bedclothes as well as the night-shirt." It was suffered to drain away!

Olimpio and Marzio took the sheet, one at the head, the other at the feet: holding it firmly, they bore the corpse into the room on which the door of the balcony opened: they set down their burden on the tiled floor, leaving the sheet beneath it. It was here that Beatrice and Lucrezia first saw the corpse, before going to tear the blood-stained bedding to shreds.

Olimpio and Marzio remained behind to clothe Cenci's body, a necessary proceeding if they were to make it appear that he had fallen while strolling on the balcony. They put on his "hose in one piece, attached them to the belt and pulled them tight," [1] then a dark-coloured cassock "of camel's hair." They dressed him as best they could, but "not any too smartly," says Marzio. Then, after careful scrutiny to make sure "that folk were not passing on the mountain road," they bore the corpse, still on its sheet, to the balcony, raised it erect, and placed, first the feet, then, gradually and laboriously, the rest of the body, in the outlet for garbage, previously widened, "for he would not fit in the other hole which Olimpio had made." The corpse fell into the warren with a dismal thud, breaking down bushes and raising a cloud of dust and rubbish.

Returning with the sheet, drenched with blood, to

[1] Marzio said: "Black or dark blue if I remember rightly."

Cenci's bed-chamber, where the women, with frantic haste, were working upon the bed, they said they were going. But Lucrezia cried: "What is this? You have done the evil and would leave us here while this bed . . . all bloody, remains!" "In very truth," Marzio later told the judge, "everything was blood, both the mattress and the sheets, especially the upper mattress." Olimpio and Marzio stayed to help the women. They carried the upper mattress to the middle of the room and began to cut it up, to unstitch it, to pull out the wool. Lucrezia took the wool, the sheet, the most blood-stained scraps of the mattress, and threw them all into a privy, "which was in the upper rooms." "I was so affrighted," she confessed, "that I know not if those things fell down or not: I cast them down and then I returned back." Mad with terror, she threw the other sheet, which also bore some blood stains, between two chests: she carried as much of the wool as seemed unspotted "into the large painted room," and heaped it together in a corner. Her wits benumbed by terror, she filled the entire house with evidences of the crime.

It was now high time that Olimpio and Marzio, who asked nothing better, should leave the castle. Their departure was thus arranged.

They were to enter a dark room not far from the inner gate of the castle: Beatrice would call Giorgio, as soon as he returned from market, would inform him of what had occurred and bring him to see the balcony. Olimpio and Marzio would seize the moment Giorgio was going upstairs to make their exit: after a little while the two women would begin to scream from the windows.

Everything took place precisely as planned. When Giorgio returned to the castle at about the twelfth hour (7 A. M.) he found the inner gate open: he was busying himself with his duties when Beatrice in an anguished voice began to call him, as if beseeching him to make all haste to her side.

Giorgio's long legs mounted the stairs rapidly. The two assassins seized their opportunity and slipped out.

Window in Santa Maria at La Petrella

Olimpio descended to his lodgings in the Colonna palazzo: his confederate, as though justice were already on his heels, made for the mountains.

Giorgio's story at this point is of special interest. "One morning about the twelfth hour . . . being in the lower rooms of the castle, in the room called the oven-room, I was called by Signora Beatrice; she cried to me: 'Giorgio, Giorgio, Giorgio!' And I replied: 'Signora?' And I looked up and saw that lady at the window weeping; and I went up, thinking to myself that Signor Francesco had been chastising Signora Lucrezia, his wife; when I got there I found Signora Beatrice in the first room, and she said nothing to me, and did not utter a word of any sort. Then I came to another room, where the cooking was done; and there I found Signora Lucrezia, and without my saying anything she said to me: 'Signor Francesco has fallen!' And I said to her: 'Where? where?' She replied: 'From the balcony!' And I leaned over, and I saw Signor Francesco down below stretched out on the ground, and I called him, saying: 'Signor Francesco! Signor Francesco!' three or four times; and seeing that he made me no answer I looked again to make sure if he were dead, because of the height of the place which was great (I have heard that this Court had it measured and it was six *canne* high [1]), and so I went back into the room, and Signora Lucrezia said to me: 'Oh, I have told him so many times not to go on that balcony, it was flimsy! But Signor Francesco would go there!' So I left my post and went down towards the village, without the ladies saying aught to me, to give out this news, and as soon as I was without I began to shout: 'Help! Help!'"

Giorgio's voice was soon drowned by those of Beatrice and Lucrezia; they took their stand at a window overlooking the village and began in turn to scream at the top of their lungs: "Help! Help!" Giorgio says that his own cries were especially directed toward the house of Don

1 About 40 feet.

Francesco Scossa, "canonical and mass-priest in Santa Maria della Petrella," hoping that the priest was in his house, near the castle, and that he would come forth and, in case Signor Francesco had not "perchance finished dying, that he might come in time to commend his soul, and confess him if such were possible."

All La Petrella was aroused by the sudden clamour. The women of the village began to scream; people ran up from every quarter to give help, partly through curiosity to know what had occurred, and partly through desire to enter the castle, always mysteriously closed, and to see the fine ladies whom La Petrella commiserated as maltreated captives. Porzia, Marzio's wife, was alone in her house; when she heard the cries she went to her door, and, seeing Olimpio passing, begged him to hasten. She herself went as far as the castle gate, but did not enter.

Plautilla's story runs as follows: "I was combing flax . . . when I heard screaming, and words shouted that I could not understand, and I was told by the women, especially by a daughter of Giovanni de Faina, who said: 'Plautilla, Plautilla, they are screaming in the castle, they are screaming in the castle!' And I ran straightway to the castle, with one slipper on and one off, and on my way I met folk everywhere going toward the castle and others returning from it, and I saw Signora Beatrice at the window of the gallery, who was crying: 'Come, come! Help, help!' And I said to her: 'What is the matter, signora?' And she gave me no answer, but those who were returning back told me that Signor Francesco was dead."

The three priests of La Petrella, Don Marzio Tommasini, Don Francesco Scossa and Don Domenico Salvati, were all in the sacristy of the church when the cries began. They put their heads out the window to hear better; but not understanding, partly because of the increasing uproar of the people in the narrow lanes, they went forth on the terrace of the church and, raising their eyes to the castle, perceived Beatrice "who was crying again:

'Call the priest! Signor Francesco has fallen from the floor into the warren!' The priests journeyed forthwith to the castle; Salvati and Tommasini nimbly, but Scossa slowly, being an old man. When they were come there they found round about Beatrice and Lucrezia a swarm of women, among them Plautilla and her mother Giovanna." Messer Attilio Ferretti, a vassal of the Colonna, and others were also in the group.

The Cenci women pretended to be regaining their senses: only a few minutes before they had feigned a deep swoon. It had been necessary to loosen Beatrice's stays and to sprinkle her face with wine. Lucrezia began to speak incoherently. Signor Francesco had gone on the balcony, either to look at "Staffoli (another castle of Signor Marzio Colonna) which stood opposite," or "to urinate," or to have an eye to the castle hill "to see if there were not some one there," when the planks, rotted by the snow of the previous winter, had given way, and he had fallen through! As though she had not warned him many a time! She had not seen Francesco fall, but she had heard the splintering of the balcony as it broke, and she had heard his words: "Jesu! Jesu! Jesu!" Beatrice remained mute, as she had been when Giorgio had answered her first summons and when Plautilla had arrived: her silence was in strange contrast with Lucrezia's irresponsible gabble.

The priests urged the Cenci women to "have patience." They descended amid the throng of men, women and boys which had collected near the wall of the wilderness, disputing, with the volubility of peasants in every age, as to the best method of getting at the body. Some said it could not be removed, so difficult was it to descend to the spot where it lay. They little guessed upon what wings Olimpio had been soaring nightly to reach his mistress's side!

Don Marzio Tommasini tells us that "the matter being such a great one, since such a notable gentleman of those regions was dead all speed was made, and every man ran and all was quickly done." Within half an hour ladders

were obtained and brought over the steep hillside. Don Francesco Scossa and Don Tommasini, seeing that proceedings for raising the corpse were on foot, went down to their church to send up a bier on which the body of the dead man might be carried.

On the arrival of the ladders, certain of the villagers mounted, and, straddling the crest of the wall while they lowered them, descended into the courtyard. Scocchino seems to have been there, with Pasquale de Sordano, Sestilio do Prospero, and others. They made their way through a wilderness of brush and scrub, over piles of refuse and filth, that had been thrown from the balcony and never removed and were by now covered with a tangled growth of weeds. Here and there were some elder bushes. Upon one of these Francesco's body had struck in its fall, breaking off a few branches.

When Scocchino reached the body, he began to raise it, covering his stockings with blood, but, when he realised its weight, he declared it impossible to remount the ladders with such a burden on his back. He consulted with the others, and they agreed on this procedure. Cenci's body was to be bound to one ladder. With the aid of ropes and other ladders, ladder and body together were to be pulled up and let down on the other side of the wall. By great efforts and amid a tumult of shouts, orders, advice, oaths, curses and encouragements, the hard task was accomplished. The body, still attached to its ladder, was borne to the level space before the outer gate of the castle and deposited near "the castle pool." Perhaps an hour had been consumed in this complicated feat. Says Giorgio: "I saw him lying dead on a ladder at the foot of the castle." On account of the great throng who were still besieging the castle, he returned sadly to the ladies' apartments to stand guard over their property.

Meantime a work of piety was going on beside the castle pool. The body was being washed, but in an irreverent fashion, and in the midst of disrespectful chatter from the curious bystanders.

Cenci's body was stripped of its cassock, so torn and

befouled by the fall into the wilderness that it seemed to the archpriest "a miserable rag." "I said they should put their hands to his mouth to see if he breathed," recounts the priest, "and they responded: 'How can he be breathing when all his body is cold?' And afterwards I also took his hand when he had been washed, and I found that it was indeed cold." In fact, those who had descended into the warren had noticed the body was cold as soon as they touched it.

It was washed clean of its blood-stains. As the water began to dissolve the blood that had clotted on the wounds, they opened afresh and streaked the face with red.

These wounds were three: two on the right temple and one, also on that side, near the eye. The first "seemed made with a cutting tool like a hatchet, for the cut was wide and was a finger long"; the second was smaller; but the one near the eye was the most serious; it "was deep and showed that it had been made with a pointed iron." So said the arch-priest, and Don Salvati confirmed the fact: "It looked to have been done with a little hatchet which had a point at the place where is commonly the hatchet-head, or with a stiletto or with a pointed iron similar to a stiletto."

Besides these wounds Don Tommasini discovered "a bruise above the left hand on the outside of the arm."

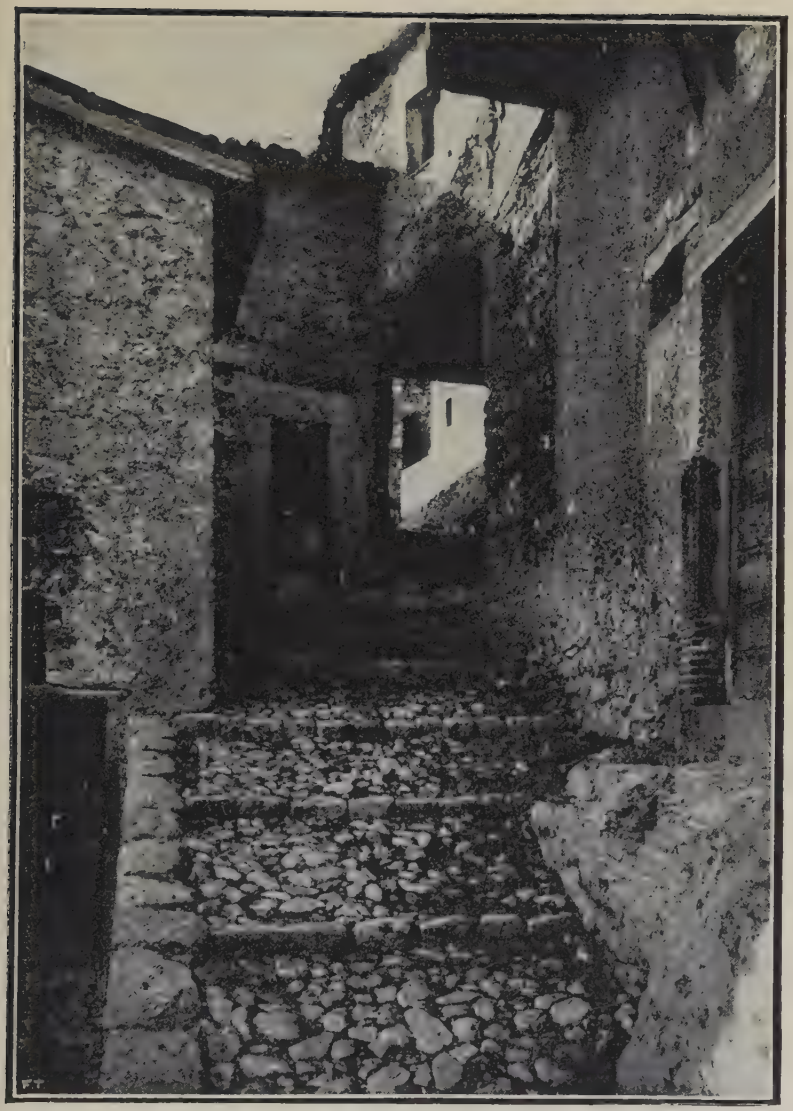
Two village women accepted the painful task of washing Francesco's body, on which not the least of the wounds were those which no weapon had made. These were Dorotea di Giovanni Andrea of La Petrella and a certain Lucia, widow of Filippo of La Petrella; the latter died a little later from the puncture made in a fatal operation for dropsy; she was perhaps the same person as Lucia de Penzaccona, from whose garden Olimpio and Marzio took the ladder which they had used to climb the wilderness wall.

Lucia seems to have been a fitting person for this grim task which she performed in silence. But, Dorotea must have been callous to a degree. Speaking to the bystanders of the wounds, she buried her finger in the one nearest

the eye to demonstrate its depth. "I could not look at it longer!" exclaimed Don Scossa. The unfortunate arch-priest also declared that the whole scene of the washing "turned his stomach"; and Porzia, Marzio Catalano's wife, who had in her turn mingled with the crowd, testified: "I turned my eyes aside so as not to see it because it frightened me."

The corpse was clothed in a shirt and laid upon the bier; on this were cushions, sheets and towels taken by Plautilla from Lucrezia's linen-chest. Lucia closed the eyes, or, according to the arch-priest's rectification, "the left eye, for the right eye was destroyed by the wound which he had close to it." Then Tommasini folded the hands and gave the order to set out toward the church. The long cortège, with the three priests at its head, wound down the narrow and tortuous lane from the castle to the village, turning back toward the west and into the church of Santa Maria, where Cenci's body was laid before the high altar.

The church, whose fabric dates back to 1391, had originally two aisles and a nave, but in the seventeenth century the two aisles were reduced to one by shutting off the arches at the right, where three baroque altars were placed. At that time, if not later, the panelling which covers the roof timbers of the nave was also installed. Yet all trace of the edifice's early charm has not disappeared. There still remain in the aisle to the left of the nave two ribbed vaultings and two trefoiled mullioned windows. The mean façade bears three coarse and heavy windows. Beneath the central one of the group, now walled up, the door opens, surmounted by an ogival lunette, at one time certainly the frame for an effigy of the Virgin and Child. The campanile, of dark coloured dressed stone, heavy and frowning, seems rather a castle tower on which to mount cannon than a church tower for bells destined to ring forth their message of prayer and suffering. But its dismal aspect was well in keeping with the tragic procession which passed beneath it on the morning of the ninth of September, 1598!



A Street near La Petrella

To-day everything within and without this sorry fane is decayed and melancholy. The paving of the little apse, now converted into the sacristy, is as rough as that of a street; the bare flagstone in the centre, said to mark the sepulchre of Francesco Cenci, is broken in many places.

At the summons of the ladies Don Marzio Tommasini again went to the castle to receive their instructions in regard to the obsequies. The first question they put to him was whether Francesco was dead, and what wounds he bore; "And Signora Lucrezia said: 'Do you think his soul is lost?' And I replied: 'I could not commend his soul to God because I found him dead'; and Signora Lucrezia added: 'When he fell down he said: "Jesu!" three times.' "

With such a lie she attempted to still her own scruples. Weak-witted and a bigot, even in that terrible hour, she fancied that with her candles and masses she could aid the soul of him whose murder she had permitted—in whose murder, indeed, she had been an accomplice.

She informed the priest in the presence of Beatrice that he should do whatever was necessary, and that "when the sons came from Rome they would pay, for they themselves had no money."

Later, in the evening, she sent Giorgio "to see if there were candles burning beside the body in the church"; when the sons arrived, she it was who paid fifteen ducats to Don Marzio for the obsequies, "candles and other expenses."

Beatrice took no part in these arrangements. She, who had feigned so resolutely before men, dared not play out her part before God.

Olimpio, as we have seen, returned to the castle. Invested with new power by his complicity, and by the terrible proof of his love which he had given Beatrice, he assumed the rôle of master, and took all reins into his hands. A day was to come when Beatrice would be asked to account for this. She would be asked why, after her father's death, she and her stepmother admitted Olimpio to the castle, whence he had been driven by Cenci himself.

"What!" Beatrice will answer: "Would Your Honour have had me take it on myself to drive him out? . . . He who was master and castellan, and had his possessions in the castle? I did not wish to meddle in the matter."

He began by ridding the castle of the swarm which had invaded it, and which, on the pretext of condoling with the widow and orphan, was penetrating to the wrecked balcony and even to Francesco's bed-chamber. To fresh sight-seers who continued to arrive he would say: "What do you want with these ladies in their distress? . . . No one can speak to them." Already, perhaps, he realised how grave an error had been made in summoning so many people to the scene of the crime.

Don Salvati recounted that Olimpio immediately became "the master," letting only those whom he chose enter to see the ladies, laying down the law, making all purchases, in short, disposing of everything. Over tall old Giorgio he assumed the position of taskmaster, sending him to La Petrella village on a thousand errands. That "the ladies" might not remain alone and without surveillance, Plautilla stayed with them during his own absences. She practically never once left them even during meals and at night, until they set forth for Rome.

Giorgio says that Olimpio ordered him, among other things, to get some lard, "for no meat could be dressed for the noon meal . . . because there was not time to roast meat on account of the great assembly of people." Olimpio and Plautilla, he adds, "ate and drank in the castle with Signor Francesco's ladies; and Olimpio's wife also slept in the castle in the rooms of those ladies."

Olimpio, filled with terror lest Cenci's wounds might awaken suspicions, could not rest easy. He descended to the church and began to bully the priests to hurry on the final offices so that the body might be buried. Like Catalano and Lucrezia, he seemed to have absolutely lost his wits. Beatrice alone remained cold, silent, self-possessed.

Olimpio's excited bearing left a bad impression on the priests. Salvati said: "Olimpio was the one who strongly urged that the body be quickly buried." Read the solemn

words of the arch-priest: "It was Olimpio who attended to the burial of Signor Francesco, in the name of the ladies, and he impatiently urged that the burial should be speedy. God grant that Olimpio was not the one who rang the bell the first time for me to go and bury Signor Francesco! And when the office was said, Olimpio quickly received the body, and hid it down in the grave with the help of some others; and then he took those things which were on the bier and carried them off with him, although they should have been left for the Company of the Sacrament; nay, when Signora Beatrice said that she wished him to be put in a wooden coffin, Olimpio said there were no more coffins, and that he should be put in the sepulchre of the Company of the Sacrament, and he said the two ladies were satisfied with this."

Don Salvati also accused Olimpio of having wrongfully appropriated the palls which were on the bier; and since Lucrezia asserted that she did not receive them again, we may believe that they remained in his possession.

It was about the twenty-third hour (6 P. M.) when the body was laid in the sepulchre; night was drawing in.

Beatrice meanwhile had lost no time on having the news of the father's death sent to her brothers in Rome. She begged them to come quickly to La Petrella to the relief of herself and her stepmother, for "they were alone, without any one." The letter naturally referred to the collapse of the balcony; it was written by Attilio Ferretti, whom we have seen among the first arrivals after the crime. Beatrice signed it and gave it to Don Marzio Tommasini, who immediately sent off Scocchino, the one who had aided Bernardo and Paolo to flee from La Petrella and who had picked up the body of Cenci in the wilderness.

Scocchino was on his way toward Rome when to La Petrella Catalano returned, exhausted, lame with journeying, his brain quite addled. He was driven there by his need of seeing his home, his wife and children again; perhaps also by that impulse which prompts so many as-

sassins to revisit the scene of their crime; perhaps also by the desire to claim the reward for his complicity.

When he had left the castle after the crime, he had slunk along the walls of La Petrella; descending through Villa Marzia into the valley of the Salto, he had climbed the hills opposite ("the Frasioni hills," he called them); then he had crossed the bridge of Rocco Vittiana and taken the path to Vallecúpola, "a place of the abbacy of San Savatore, titular church of the Cardinal Montalto." His heart led him toward Poggio Vittiano, where his mother lived. He took refuge at her side; but not even there did his guilty soul find repose, so once more he turned his steps toward La Petrella, arriving at "about the hour of the midday meal."

We see him entering his own house and showing himself to his wife. "When he came back," said she, "I asked him where he had been. He replied: 'I have been to Vallecúpola.' And I asked him what he had done there, and he told me he had gone to guide a stranger; and I said: 'How much did he give you?' He answered: 'He gave me five giulii.'" Both statements were inventions; later he told the judge that he had gone to Vallecúpola to search for a muleteer, Colangelo, who was to come to Marzio's house for a load of lentils and carry it to Poraglia, but that he had learned from a shepherd that Colangelo was absent, and so had turned back through Vallecúpola.

In truth he had taken flight as if he saw the *sbirri* at his heels; he had no definite goal, and soon turned back on his traces. He had not the violent spirit of Olimpio, nor the strong, cold mind of Beatrice. A thousand terrors beset his brain and gave him no peace; he himself tells us this. He feared that Olimpio, who had "dragged him into" the crime, would make away with him for fear he might speak. "I began to be afraid," he confesses. "I was afraid that they would kill me also so that nought would be known of the death, for Olimpio is a haughty man, a man of the devil; and this thought and fear entered my mind after we had killed Signor Francesco." His suspicion that Olimpio might have conceived this sav-

Tomb of Francesco Cenci in Santa Maria

age purpose was well founded. Fra' Pietro Calvetti testified that his brother Olimpio twice confessed to him that he wished to murder Marzio, and that Beatrice had repeatedly opposed his purpose because of some prognostication by an astrologer!

After breaking his fast Marzio left the house and mingled with the village folk, who were absorbed in retelling the facts and in exchanging impressions. He learnt that already some suspicion of homicide, though expressed in vague terms, was creeping into the version of the fall by accident from the balcony. He returned home in great distress.

The hostile gossip increased as the afternoon wore on; at first the mere mention of a crime was made; then names were introduced. All who had seen the balcony asserted that the body of Francesco Cenci could not have passed through the hole which was pointed out. The priests of Santa Maria della Petrella later discussed the point in detail; meanwhile so general was the impression that it tormented even the mind of poor old Giorgio.

Some one also had made the remark that Signor Francesco's bed, though in proper order, was too low, and that therefore some mattresses must have been removed from it, for "it was not possible that Signor Francesco could sleep in such a poor fashion."

The priests, moreover, who were accustomed to go to the castle for the mass when Cenci was alive, could not persuade themselves that he could have risen so early, at about seven, when the women began to scream; it was the more unlikely since he had been for some days tormented by gout. In fact, when they had gone to say their mass, they had always gone after the 13th hour (8 A. M.), or more likely at the 14th or 15th hour. Even then "they would have to wait at least an hour before he would arise."

In short, Olimpio's error in insisting that the offices of the dead be hastened was a disastrous one; still more disastrous was his horrible action in seizing the dead man's body and thrusting it, uncoffined and without the

slightest token of respect or pity, into the vault, whence later it would be brought forth with all men's eyes upon it.

We now come to the inward and personal tragedies of the wives of the two assassins.

When Porzia returned home in the evening, it was common talk throughout La Petrella that Signor Francesco could not have fallen from the balcony, but that he had been murdered and thrown down, and that her husband and Olimpio were implicated. We shall let her tell her own story: "And I heard publicly from an uncle of mine, called Paolo d'Alfonso that it was said that my husband, Marzio, had gone with Olimpio to kill Signor Francesca; Paolo said to me: 'Just speak of it with Marzio.' And I told him I would do so, and so I spoke to Marzio, saying: 'Do you know, Marzio, that you have ruined me! It is said that you went with Olimpio to kill Signor Francesco Cenci.' And I said these words to him weeping and full of melancholy and grief, and he answered me: 'Oh, you make me sick with your jabber.' And I still asked him to tell me the truth . . . and he said: 'I was there when Signor Francesco was killed, but I did not kill him myself. . . . I did not hit him; Olimpio hit him.' And he would not say more to me, and all this befell in my house."

On the other hand Plautilla, who had entered the castle and had not left it all day, had aided the Cenci women to put various things in order and to explore the strong-boxes of Signor Francesco. He had "two strong-boxes of stamped leather, a small drum-shaped box" and perhaps also the "little casket no bigger than a matin-book, of stamped leather, with golden lilies" which he had had with him in his palazzo at La Dogana. Yet there was found in them only about thirty scudi; nor did the servant Girolamo bring back more from Aquila, when he returned that evening at about the 23d hour (6 P. M.). Francesco, as was his custom, had sent him there for money. But Beatrice got from him only four or five scudi, no more.

Lucrezia performed other tasks, as if to benumb her

Church of Santa Maria, Petrella

wits, availing herself of Plautilla's aid. The blood-stained cassock removed from Francesco's body at the castle pool was put to soak in a copper basin, other clothes were spread out to dry and a search was made for all kinds of odds and ends. "On that very day when Signor Francesco died," said Plautilla . . . "Signora Lucrezia ran with me from one room to another, and I saw that there was . . . in a large painted room . . . a heap of wool; it seemed about four decine's weight, and it was heaped up in a corner and it was mattress wool. Signora Lucrezia said to me: 'Why do you not take this wool? Take it below and keep it for yourself; it is good, but of no use to us. Who wants to make up the beds now?' And then she turned to Signora Beatrice, for she too was still there, and she said: 'It is better that Plautilla should carry off this wool, so that the folk who see her here may not suspect something,' for people were still entering into that room; and so I took that wool and put it in a large clothes basket, and I put it on a table in the kitchen and covered it with a piece of white cloth, one of mine that I had in the castle."

Plautilla had somewhat collected her thoughts, and was weary from her labours and constant emotions, when (her tale continues) "about eventide a crony of mine named Madalena de Cenci came to condole with the ladies, and she drew me aside, saying to me: 'O my dear friend, I went out to fetch wood, and when I came back I heard much whispering up and down the village. But God be praised that you were not in the castle when this thing happened to Signor Francesco.' And going on I said: 'What is being whispered, my friend?' And she told me that it was being said and believed about the village that those two ladies, that is, Signora Lucrezia and Signora Beatrice, had given Signor Francesco a push and thrown him down through that floor or balcony, whereof he was dead. And I told her that it could not be. Still she held it as certain that so people were saying about the village, and there was much whispering of it. After Madalena had departed, Artemisia, my sister, came that

same evening to the castle, and it was late; and seeing that she was troubled, vexed, melancholy and ill at ease, and seeing also that she did not speak to me, I went up to her, so close to her that no one in that room where the things were should hear us, and I said to her: 'What ails you that you are so rude and vexed, Artemisia?' And she replied to me: 'Ah, sister; there is much whispering throughout the village anent the death of Signor Francesco'; and I said to her: 'Why?' And she answered me: ''Tis said that Signor Francesco was thrown down!' At that I was greatly afflicted and grieved, and I fell into heavy thought, suspecting also that my husband was belike entangled in this death. And what made me fall into this suspicion and thought was that I had seen my husband in the castle threatening me with his finger; and for this reason I was suspicious that Olimpio was entangled in this death together with those ladies."

Plautilla then entered the chamber of Beatrice, who had cast herself on the bed and drowsed off, fully clothed. Plautilla went to the side of Lucrezia, who was seated near the fire; for the weather was cold and stormy and the very blood in her veins must have been chilled after that terrible day. Plautilla took a seat beside her and said in a hushed tone, so as not to awaken Beatrice: "Ah, Signora, they are talking up and down the village and loudly whispering and they make no end of idle talking; and they are saying strange words about the death of Signor Francesco. Ah, may I not be brought to ruin, may my husband not be entangled therein!" She continued, giving her evidence far better than words of ours could render it "Bemoaning myself greatly on this score. . . . I repeated it to her many times, to know from her secretly how this business had gone, although she said it was not true and would quickly pass to other talk. I wanted to make my mind easy, and urged her on from my wish to know if my husband was entangled in it. . . . Finally she said to me, seeing me so afflicted: 'Fear not, for Olimpio was not involved in it, but it was Marzio who threw him down.' But this did not allay my mind at all, for I began

to suspect that Olimpio was involved in it." Some time passed; then, Beatrice having given signs of awaking from Heaven knows what tortured slumbers, Plautilla went to stand over her and said: "Signora Beatrice, look well that you have not involved my husband in what is bruited up and down the village about the death of your father."

Beatrice immediately realised that the stepmother had allowed herself to say irrevocable words; she responded shortly that "Olimpio was not involved in it, but Marzio was." Plautilla added: "I said no other words, but I remained against my will, with this question torturing me, whether my husband had done it or no."

The dinner hour arrived; "the table was not laid." Plautilla ate standing; the Cenci women desired no food; "they took only a morsel with their wine. . . . And that evening there were no more words, they only went to bed after they had drunk." Lucrezia and Beatrice were together in Beatrice's bed, Plautilla and Artemisia, "her girl sister," on a mattress spread on the floor.

Plautilla did not close her eyes; her distress of mind, far from being allayed, increased amid that silence full of the pretence of sleep. "I was in greater suspicion than ever that Olimpio had been in it, and it seemed to me a thousand years before I could go and speak to him of it." He returned late to the castle and ate with Giorgio. Plautilla heard him and waited a while; when all was silent she traversed the gallery and entered the room where Olimpio had taken up his quarters. She found him still on his feet. " 'Olimpio, I hear great talk about the village anent this death of Signor Francesco, and it is said that he was thrown down. Look well, unhappy man, that you were not entangled and imbrued in this death.' He answered me vigorously: 'Oh, have you lived so little that you think I have done such a thing? Do you not know that last night I slept with you? I could no more have touched Signor Francesco and done this deed than I could have touched you and these other people.' And still more afflicted I went on to him: 'Think, Olimpio, that it is being said and murmured about the village that he

was thrown down, and that he could not have fallen down of himself, and Signora Lucrezia and Signora Beatrice have told me that it was Marzio who threw him down; and I believe, by the love of God, that you are not involved in it.' Then said Olimpio: 'Be still, be still! And be at peace, for I was not involved in it, and it is true that it was Marzio'; and he went on: 'Do not believe it; for one thing, I slept with you last night, and then this morning I was seen in the village, and when they were crying in the castle, Porzia, Marzio's wife, called to me: "They are setting up a great hullabaloo in the castle"; and I ran up there.'"

Plautilla returned to her couch in great distress. Neither the words of the Cenci women nor those of Olimpio had brought her peace of mind. Naturally, from what she had been told, the idea in her mind was that Signor Francesco had been killed by being pushed from the balcony, not that he had first been assassinated and then thrown down.

During the night the agitated and sleepless Plautilla thought of nothing else save of attempting to wrest more ample confessions from Beatrice and—an easier matter—from Lucrezia. In fact Plautilla spoke to them again, as soon as day had come and all had risen and Artemisia had been got out of the way on some pretext. They were in Signora Beatrice's room, she told the judge: she asked "How Marzio had gone about the murder of Signor Francesco; and then . . . Signora Lucrezia said that this Marzio entered Signor Francesco's bedchamber early in the morning, as Signora Lucrezia was leaving the room; she had slept the night with her husband; and as soon as she came out, Marzio entered that bedchamber with a stick which, she said, was a rolling-pin. Although Signora Lucrezia said she would not have him enter, still he persisted in entering, and Signora Lucrezia went off . . . and at the time (Marzio) killed him, Signor Francesco was still in his bed, and had not risen up." In short, Lucrezia counselled her "not to be distressed at all be-

cause Olimpio was not entangled in any way whatsoever."

Thus, even in the midst of their lies, the perpetrators of the crime gradually built up their confession by telling scraps of the truth. In face of the terrible heaping up of accusations on the part of the inhabitants of La Petrella the Cenci women's frantic desire to escape from the place grew stronger and stronger. Alarmed lest the one message they had entrusted to Scocchino might be lost or mislaid by accident or through some other reason, perhaps also fearing that he could not enter Rome "because it was guarded on account of the pest," they sent to Rome another messenger with the same message on September 10. This was the servant Girolamo, who had returned to La Petrella from Aquila the evening before, as we have seen.

They hastened their preparations for departure, ready to leave the moment any of their kin should arrive. Plautilla, in ever greater distress, aided them. Remembering what had passed under her eyes during the three days before the crime, nothing could banish from her mind the thought that Olimpio might be "entangled" in the matter.

Further revelations were not spared her.

First, as she was moving the two mattresses that had been emptied of their stuffing by Olimpio and Marzio, she saw that one of them had "some tiny spots of blood, and on one side a good-sized streak." She was told that they had been made when Signor Francesco "had upset a leeching-cup."

In the morning, meanwhile, a boy arrived at the castle; he had been sent by the arch-priest, who, unable to renounce the rights of the Company of the Sacrament, claimed the clothes of the dead man. Giorgio relates that Signora Lucrezia gave orders to take the cassock from the copper bowl, where it had been soaking all night, and to give it to the boy "for the love of God." But Don Marzio then arrived with the other priests; they declared that though they were the ladies' most obedient servants, they must ask something more besides. Lu-

crezia, still followed by Plautilla (Beatrice, it seems, had no wish to be seen nor to speak), led them to the room outside the one where the ladies had slept the night before, or the next room to Beatrice's bed chamber. She opened a chest, took from it the clothes which were within and handed them to the arch-priest, who "bade her God-speed."

It was at this time that Plautilla made another horrifying discovery; she recounts it thus: "Then I perceived a rolled-up sheet, it was on the floor . . . between two chests, that is, the chest wherefrom the clothes had just been taken and another one beside it; and it was bloody; and I, thinking it was blood of those things which women have, put my hand to it to bear it off so that it should not be seen; at first as it lay so on the floor, one saw but a little of it, but, drawing it forth, I saw a great quantity of blood all fresh; and I, seeing this quantity of blood, all so fresh, turned to Signora Lucrezia and said to her very softly: 'Ah, Signora Lucrezia, what have you done!' And Signora Lucrezia replied, she too very softly, 'Be still!' And we talked thus very softly because there were many people there outside the room. Then, so that no more should be discovered, I rolled up that sheet well and tight so that the blood could not be seen, and I bore it to a large room adjoining that room, and I hid it amid some firewood. . . . Signora Lucrezia lost all hold of herself and trembled when she saw that I had caught sight of that sheet, all so bloody. . . . Then that evening, it was night, she bade me take it from the place where I had hid it, and so I did; and Signora Lucrezia came and took some water in a bowl and put the sheet therein to soak, leaving it there all night; and in the morning, at daybreak, Signora Lucrezia and I went there to that room, and I laundered the sheet and washed the blood from it." While Plautilla was washing it, she and Lucrezia wept. Beatrice entered; she was annoyed to see them at this work and crying, and asked the reason for their tears. Lucrezia permitted herself to say something which revealed that she had confessed the whole crime to

The Old Square at Petrella

Plautilla; she said: "Does this crime that has been committed seem so little to you?" Beatrice apostrophised her violently but in a single word. "Blockhead!" she exclaimed and turned upon her heel.

"I felt compassion because of that great matter which they had already confessed to me," said Plautilla further, "and I saw it clearly from that sheet which was so bloodied." No longer, then, was it true that Marzio had pushed Signor Francesco when he was on the balcony, no longer true that Marzio had struck him with the rolling-pin and then thrown him down; Cenci had been assassinated in his bed with very different weapons! Still thinking of her husband, she put more questions and insisted on learning "how that death had taken place." She concluded: "The ladies, seeing themselves discovered, confessed it to me and prayed that I would say naught of it to any man." But they persevered in telling her that Olimpio had not been present. Lucrezia's tale corresponds perfectly with that of Plautilla; she confesses that she once repeated to Plautilla: "Would that this were not what happened; it is true, alas! but your husband was not there!"

Words were not the only means taken to reassure Plautilla. Gifts were added. Plautilla had already received the wool which she sent by means of a "poor beggar-woman" (Antonia di Luciano) to the house of her uncle, Massimo Gasperini, where her sister, Artemisia, lived. Then she says, "Signora Lucrezia gave me a red petticoat, one of her own which was turned, and she told me to cut it up to make a coat for my little daughter, Vittoria; and she gave me some capes and told me to wear them for love of her, and some dishes and kitchen oddments." She continued: "Signora Beatrice gave me a petticoat of white serge and some worn materials of net, and she left behind also one of her tunics of grey *rimeto*,[1] which she told me to send on to her, but I did not send it on."

In this way the 10th of September passed. Plautilla and Olimpio ate "with the ladies," and in the evening Lucrezia slept in Beatrice's bed; on their mattress on the

[1] The author is at a loss to explain this word.—*Trans.*

floor slept Plautilla and Artemisia with Prospero, Plautilla's little son, whom she had now brought up to the castle.

On the morning of the 11th Marzio Catalano appeared at the castle. He came to claim the reward of his complicity. Plautilla had gone down to her uncle's house for the first time after her two days' seclusion with the ladies. She found "in the hall" the wool just as she had sent it, in the basket, covered with a cloth. She examined it. "It was white and long stapled. There were some greyish lumps," and "in some lumps were spots of blood, but no great quantity." She lifted the pallet from Artemisia's bed and hid the wool beneath it; she then went to find her mother and soon after returned to the castle.

Marzio was there, discussing matters, not with the weak and garrulous Lucrezia, but with Beatrice. She gave him twenty scudi and the purple dress belonging to his wife, which murdered Francesco had demanded as a pledge for the final payment on the purchase of his mare. We may let Marzio speak: "The truth is that Signora Beatrice promised to give me half of the money and the property there was in the castle, and she said there was a great quantity of money; and afterwards I returned to the castle to get back a dress of my wife's and also to see that this lady should quit herself of the promise she had made me for doing that deed; she gave me that dress and some money wrapped up in a white cloth, which she did not count, saying that in Rome she would quit herself of all she had promised me, because there had not been found so much money there as was thought; and so when I came home and was alone I counted this money and found that there were twenty scudi of silver in paoli[1] and testoni;[2] and seeing such a little sum of money, I complained to Olimpio, telling him that I did not want them and would take them back; and he promised me ten scudi of his own, which he gave me before Signor Giacomo came to La

[1] About 10 cents.
[2] About 35 cents.

Petrella, and he said that in Rome he would have Signora Beatrice and Signor Giacomo give me the rest of the money and he would have me treated in such fashion that I should be content."

A little after midday watchers from the castle perceived a considerable body of horsemen journeying toward La Petrella. Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci were in the party with others of whom we shall speak in their turn.

Here a step backward in the chronological order of our history becomes necessary.

On the morning of the tenth the servant Girolamo had set out from La Petrella with the second message of the death of Francesco. The French lackey Paino had at the same time left Rome; knowing nothing of what had occurred, he was bringing a letter from Domenico Stella directed to Francesco Cenci. The messengers met in midjourney; Girolama informed Paino of all that had happened, and the two returned together toward Rome.

Scocchino, meanwhile, had arrived with the letter written by Attilio Ferretti and signed by Beatrice. It was immediately brought to Giacomo's house on the Monte de' Cenci and read with concern (though, one may well believe, not with any anguish) by Giacomo, Bernardo, and Paolo "in a room where the records are kept." The letter was directed to the Cenci brothers "in common." Lodovica Velli, Giacomo's wife, said that she had read it only in part, because at the news of such a misfortune (the fall from the balcony) she had burst out weeping, and had gone no further with the reading!

Giacomo at first hesitated whether to go to La Petrella, then decided upon it, and immediately sent for Cesare Cenci, Lodovica's uncle ("a little old fellow," in Plautilla's words). Cesare was not at home, but later, when he had returned and received the message, he hurried to see Giacomo, whom he found in company with Lodovica. At first he received with some degree of suspicion this letter written by the hand neither of Beatrice nor of Lucrezia, as well as the tale told by Scocchino. But Scocchino in-

sisted, and added that he himself had picked up Signor Francesco's body from the wilderness and that he had got blood on his stockings. "He showed them to me; then to enlighten myself the better as to whether he was telling the truth I told him that I meant to send to the Signor Governor of Rome to have him put in prison, surmising that all this was invention; but he replied to me that he would go to prison wherever I might wish, for the fact was as he had related it."

Cesare Cenci was interested more than the others in the expedition to La Petrella and went forthwith to the house of the inevitable Orazio Pomella, in the piazza Catinara. Pomella was "a huge fellow," according to Plautilla, always rapid and picturesque in her choice of phrases. He was the factotum of the Cenci; forever mixed up in their tortuous dealings. He was no saint himself, having been two or three times in gaol. Cesare sketched the event, and concluding: "I must be on my way," proceeded toward the Campo dei Fiori. Orazio did not even stop to order his clothing; he ran coatless to see Giacomo, and accepted the invitation to join the expedition to La Petrella. It was arranged that four horses should be ready at an early hour of the following day; meanwhile a litter for the ladies was found in Tordinona and immediately dispatched.

Later Giacomo also paid a call on Pomella; he found him at dinner with his brother Aurelio, with his apprentices still at work; he confessed to Giacomo that he had not a giulio to make the journey. They hastened together to see Samuele Ascarella, a Jew, who lent them twenty scudi on security.

On the morning of the 11th, two hours before day, the company set forth. Those in the party were Giacomo, Bernardo, Cesare Cenci and Pomella, all on horseback. Scocchino followed on foot, happy at the fine tips he had had: a lot of small articles, an arquebus, a little cross of gold.

Between Mentana and Rome they encountered Girolamo, bearing the second message, and Paino. These two

Posticciola

joined their party and faced about toward La Petrella. The group now consisted of seven persons.

In the evening they arrived at Posticciola, a fief of the Mareri. They dismounted at the inn; but all save the servants, who remained at the hostelry, were entertained at the castle of Giovanni Antonio Mareri, a friend of Francesco Cenci.

Resuming their journey early the following morning (Saturday, Sept. 12), they arrived at La Petrella at about the 19th hour (2 P. M.) in time to "break their fast."

"About half way to La Petrella," said Pomella, "we met a kiln-worker who told us he was a good friend to Signor Francesco and condoled with us much about his death . . . and this kiln-worker came with us almost up to the gate," that is, the "great gate of La Petrella, on the side of Rome." Giacomo said that "there was a great throng there, almost the greater part of the inhabitants." The story was confirmed (Marzio, mingling with the crowd, repeated it to Bernardo) that the master had fallen from the balcony, that he had been buried, "and that the courts had been collecting information." "I did not stay my horse to speak with those people," said Giacomo, "when I found them at the gate of La Petrella, but five or six of them came with me and followed me and came up some distance, and some folk came up all the way." They found some prying countryfolk still hanging round the castle. The party dismounted, and Olimpio opened the gate to them. Bernardo hailed him, but Giacomo pretended not to know him, and to be seeing him now for the first time. The reason can easily be comprehended.

Coming to the bedroom, they found the Cenci women, and embraced them. The women wept, Cesare tells us; Pomella bears him out, adding two characteristic touches: "Giacomo wept a little"; and "I did not weep." Then all went to see the balcony; many other people arrived at this point; they remained together studying and "speculating" to reconstruct the incident. Among the others

were Don Marzio Tommasini and Don Salvati. Bernardo expected, so he confessed, "courtesies, salutations, subserviences and blandishments from the people of that band." If so, he had much deluded himself. The judgment they had formed of the Cenci was too severe for such things; they remained stern and distant.

Lucrezia never ceased retelling the tale; and at every retelling she would add some new details. She told Pomella that she had been "lacing up something" in a room near the room by the balcony when she caught the noise of wood breaking; and she had heard Francesco exclaim "Jesu!" twice; three times she had said at first. She had run out, but saw only the hole. She understood then what had happened and had begun to call Beatrice and to scream. She and Beatrice leaned over, indicating to those present some of the elder branches broken by the fall of Francesco's body.

Meanwhile the two priests were making their own observations, and very different ones, in silence. The archpriest thought that if Francesco had fallen, breaking through the balcony floor, he would have pulled the railing toward him; and this railing, with its fracture, would not incline outward. Besides this, the hole was too small to permit the passage of Cenci's body. So thought Don Salvati also: "I am sure that he cannot have fallen thence," not even from the small aperture which had been made in the parapet. Everything had an "artificial" appearance. Besides, "half of the floor was the top of the wall which rose from below and came up to that flooring, and the other half outside, on the side of the parapet, was planked, so that there remained but little space for that planking, and of that planking there was only one plank broken, through which was a little hole too small for the body of Signor Francesco."

Then the people departed, and the company was able to dine at the twentieth hour (about 3 P. M.). "Olimpio served us at table" said Cesare Cenci, "and he ate together with us: he would serve a little and then eat a little."

The Cenci brothers then began an inventory "of all the goods of Signor Francesco which were in the castle." Orazio Pomella tells us that a book was found, written by hand about a half century before by Cristoforo, father of Francesco; it prognosticated his whole life "up to his death . . . and it told us that he was to have just so many children and that he was destined to fall." The children had certainly done their share in making the prophecy a true one!

Beatrice had now put away Signor Francesco's two rings (one large, of gold with a plain diamond, the other also of gold with a diamond cut to a point); and the brothers, comprehending, made no objection; neither did Giacomo grumble when she proposed to give the father's cloak as a sop to the deluded Catalano. This cloak—we are to find so many references to it!—is minutely described for us. "It was of a dark mixture, split on both sides at the shoulders so that Signor Francesco could throw it on his back and thrust his arms through those slits." The collar was of "venetrino" [1] velvet, with buttons and frogs of the same shade. It was fringed with galloon at the seams and the armholes. A sumptuous garment indeed, which the unhappy Marzio will bear like a cloak of lead, in his flights and prisons, till the hour of his death. So unsuited was it to the poor knave that when he appeared with it before his wife, she cried out: "Whoever gave you that cloak?" "Signora Beatrice." "Why did she give it to you?" "How do I know? For charity." And the despair in the heart of Porzia waxed greater.

Evening came on without any thought in the mind of the Cenci brothers of ordering fitting obsequies for their dead. Nor did any one of them go to see the church and the spot where their father had been buried, which "made all the people murmur and marvel greatly." The priests waited a long time in vain; then the oldest, Don Scossa, ascended to the castle. Lucrezia understood; calling him aside, she put twenty and a half giulii in his hand, saying

[1] Perhaps from *Venetus*, greenish.

to him: "Do you bear in remembrance the soul of Signor Francesco, for here no one thinks of him more, and say naught of this to any man." Not only did such conduct seem unseemly to the people, not only did Lucrezia appear to be afflicted by it, but so also did Cesare Cenci himself, and Orazio Pomella as well. This last deposed that they took "no care" about the manner of their father's death, nor the funeral rites, and that they did not inquire with what honours he had been interred, nor whether, after being rescued from the wilderness, he had been brought back into the castle. "They did nothing at all of all those things!" Lucrezia, Beatrice, and the priests of La Petrella told the new arrivals that Francesco had been buried in the church of La Petrella. Cesare Cenci confessed in his turn that none of the sons visited the sepulchre of their father, nor could he understand why they had not done him so customary a civility—"*solitum officium exequiale.*" He added that afterwards he had pleaded with Giacomo to "essay to bring the body to Rome to have it interred in his own tomb (at San Tommaso de' Cenci), but so many difficulties were interposed by the Royal Court that for that reason no more was done."

But the sons also had their share in interposing these obstacles.

Later, in the trial, Bernardo will testify: "I would not go to see him"; and Giacomo: "When I arrived at La Petrella I found that my lord father was buried in a church of La Petrella, but I know not which church it was, and they said that he had been buried by order of the courts. I did not seek to know more, nor otherwise to see him." And again: "I did not go to see any place in that village, only once did I enter into a church below there, outside of the village of La Petrella, to say a paternoster when I made my return to Rome with my folk; I saw no other churches nor places in that village at all. It was told me at La Petrella that my father had been buried in a church of La Petrella, and I do not remember

which church they said, and I have seen no other church than the one I said." He had no obsequies performed because he did not stop at La Petrella. He ended by saying that he had given four or five scudi to Don Marzio, the arch-priest; a lie qualified by the phrase in an undertone "to the best of my belief."

In the evening, somewhat late, another meal was served; but this time the women, including naturally Plautilla, ate separately, and the men elsewhere.

After dining, they wrote a letter in common to Marzio Colonna, deferentially informing him of what had occurred. They then began to "pack away the records," putting them together "in certain sacks and chests."

The departure of the Cenci and their "train" from La Petrella took place on the 13th, at about nine o'clock in the morning,[1] after they had waited in vain for the litter ordered for the ladies. It would have been useful, especially for one in Beatrice's condition; but she herself must have insisted on setting off for Rome on horseback. The litter had not arrived in two days and a half, nor was there any news of it. Its drivers, in fact, ill acquainted with the road, had arrived at Nerola and had then continued to Rieti, thus more than doubling the distance. By the time they had made the toilsome journey through Pendenza, Capradosso and Staffoli and had come at last to La Petrella, the Cenci were already far away. Even so, one Gian Cesare di Giovanni of La Petrella hastened after them to inform them, but he overtook them only at Nerola, when they had covered more than half the distance toward Rome.[2]

The company consisted of the following: Lucrezia, Beatrice, Giacomo, Bernardo, Cesare Cenci, Pomella, Olimpio Calvetti and his daughter Vittoria, about seven

[1] A compromise between the testimony of Giacomo, who says "at the fifteenth hour (10 A. M.)" and that of Pomella, who says "at the second hour of day (8 A. M.)"

[2] Giacomo gave him a tip of three testoni and sent him back.

years old;[1] these were all mounted, including the little girl. Following them on foot came the servants, Giorgio, Scocchino, Paino, and a certain Cesare d'Aquila, who had already gone to Rome in July to bring back Bernardo to La Petrella.

Marzio Catalano also joined the party, but only because Giacomo, seeing him before his house as the cavalcade descended from the castle, had invited him to fall in the ranks.

Then followed two muleteers "with the goods," and another leading a mare stolen from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, which Olimpio had recovered in the Cìcolano and was bringing to Marzio Colonna at Zagarolo.

As they left La Petrella they were followed by a score of people, "boys, women, girls, and men." Immediately without the village they halted at the Capuchin monastery because, as we know, Giacomo wished to dismount and "say a paternoster." They then resumed their journey, gradually losing their inquisitive escort after a mile or two. Three or four only had the strength and the will to go as far as Nerola, where they passed the night in some stables. It was here also that Catalano dropped out; he had come at the invitation of Giacomo and in the hope that he would receive some gift; but Giacomo put three testoni in his hand and dismissed him, so that Catalano's spite grew the greater.

That night the whole company lodged at the inn of the Fienili[2] below Nerola on the via Reatina. The following morning the journey was resumed; when they came to the inn of La Mentana, Olimpio left the party, saying that he was going to Zagarolo to deliver the Grand Duke's mare to Colonna. He left Vittoria in the care of Beatrice.

During the journey, whenever the accomplices found themselves riding together, they could not refrain from discussing the death of Francesco. Cesare Cenci said that

[1] "Eight or nine years old," said Bernardo in January 1599; "seven, eight, or six years," said Giacomo in the same month. She must have been born in 1591. Olimpio in fact married Plautilla in 1590.

[2] Cesare Cenci said that Olimpio left the party at Nerola. He confused him with Marzio Catalano.

he took no note of these conversations. Naturally, "in riding onward every one conversed now in one group now in another, as is customary according to the chances of the journey." Beatrice refers to a dialogue between Giacomo and herself from which we may infer how early his base mind conceived the thought of exculpating himself by casting all the blame on the two women. "Upon the road," she said, "while we were returning from La Petrella to Rome . . . Giacomo asked me how the matter had chanced; and I said to him: 'Who knows better than you?' And Giacomo said to me: 'I know naught of it; I was not there, how would you that I know of it?' And I answered: 'You know it well. Do you not know that you commanded it to us?' And then Giacomo said: 'Take good heed never to speak of this thing to any one and to keep the business secret.' And for that time nothing else was said, for we were waiting to continue the journey, and no more was said of this matter." Later Giacomo will try the same game with Lucrezia.

While the Cenci were travelling to Rome, Plautilla sought out Porzia to learn if it was true that she had seen Olimpio pass near her house when the screams were heard from the castle; Porzia confirmed the fact.

She was assuredly seeking information to be used in defence of her husband. Yet in her mind the fatal truth was no longer in doubt.

CHAPTER XV

AFTER THE CRIME

On their return to Rome, the two Cenci women did not find the tranquillity they had looked forward to. The terrible accusation that they had compassed the murder of Signor Francesco pursued them, while Giacomo continued his despicable course of seeking to exclude all responsibility from himself. He attempted to repeat with Lucrezia his procedure with Beatrice on the journey. "Giacomo said to me one day in his own house, here in Rome, after we had returned from La Petrella: 'Alas, Lucrezia, what was all this business? How did that crime occur, of the death of my father?' And I said to him: 'You know better than I, and you act as if it were all new to you. You have done everything, and led me on, and now you pretend not to know it.' And he replied: 'I? I was in Rome. What do I know of it?' And I replied to him: 'Signor Giacomo, there is no need to act thus, for you know everything, and without your order nothing would have been done.' And then Signor Giacomo said to me: 'Just tell me now how that matter of the killing took place.' I answered: 'I do not want to be telling those things over and over. Bid your sister tell you; she knows better than I; you all of you know it better than I.' Then said Giacomo: 'Come now, we shall get Olimpio out of the way, and nothing will ever be known; I will arrange everything. I will speak to Signor Marzio (Colonna) and all will be arranged.' " [1]

Barely four or five days after this, Olimpio came to Rome. He had just quitted Zagarolo, whither he had gone to restore the Grand Duke's mare and to tell his lord

[1] In the Vatican *Summarium* this passage is abbreviated and in Part V varied thus: "Sig. Giacomo told me not to worry about anything, that he had spoken to Signor Marzio, and that all would be arranged."

in his own fashion of Francesco Cenci's unfortunate fall to death from the balcony. He immediately sought the house of the Cenci; he found them far less indifferent to the death of Signor Francesco than they had been at La Petrella. They were in fact making arrangements "to clothe the whole family in mourning . . . as is fitting for people of their quality."

Olimpio seems to have put in an appearance in the Colonna palace but rarely; he chose to spend almost his entire days, not only in the palace of the Cenci, but as an intimate of Beatrice. He ate at table with them—something in those days not admitted for individuals of a different social class. He even ate at the same table with Beatrice, and with Lodovica, Giacomo's wife. Lucrezia had gone to the Velli house in Trastevere.[1]

He often slept in the house. Giacomo himself confessed it: "He has been there to eat and to sleep various times." And at this point, when the Bolognese coachman, Giacomo di Giovanni, was being interrogated, he said that he did not know "with whom" Olimpio slept, and added the significant statement: "It was none of my business!"

Now let us give ear to the faithful Giorgio, who had accompanied the Cenci from La Petrella to Rome and continued to serve them for about a month and a half. At that time he saw Olimpio "always there . . . and I also saw him eating at their table, morning and evening and from the beginning of his stay. While the ladies, I mean Signora Beatrice and Signor Giacomo's wife, were eating with Signor Giacomo, Bernardo and Paolo, Olimpio likewise would eat together with them, at the same table, with those gentlemen." Sometimes Olimpio was absent; sometimes he would dine with the lawyer, Messer Silla Morico; but customarily he would remain in the Cenci household for weeks on end.

One day Beatrice failed to appear at the common table; it was reported that she was dining separately, with Lodo-

1 Her examination of Nov. 16 was made there. Therefore Giacomo was mistaken in saying that she was in the house of her brother, Orazio Petroni.

vica. The matter did not pass unobserved; and we may ask ourselves whether this absence should not be ascribed to a certain serious development which was the natural consequence of relations between Beatrice and Olimpio, begun ten months before.

Of this we shall learn more in due time.

Just how the tangled business affairs of the Cenci brothers stood at this date it is impossible to say definitely. On September 16, three days after their return from La Petrella, they chose the *procuratore* Valerio Antonelli, noble of Aquila, to take possession on their account of the paternal estate: castles, palazzi, houses, and landholdings. But these were burdened by a colossal weight of debts.[1] Giacomo and Bernardo saw their situation to be somewhat critical, and plunged into further lawsuits: against Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, against those creditors who had foreclosed on the family property, and against many others. Nor was this enough; in order to gain a little ready money they industriously attacked their kinsman Savelli. Making the claim that Antonina's child was stillborn, they demanded on that ground the restitution of the mother's dowry; they were only pacified when Savelli abandoned this large sum into their hands.

The names of other lawyers appear. The story ran about Rome that "great debts have been discovered, left by Signor Francesco Cenci; but there are also such great assets that when his heirs were offered 50,000 scudi and all the property under trust restriction, in exchange for ceding all other rights, they would not accept it; and it appears, among other complications, that there has been found a certain chest of money which he [Francesco] left in the Hospital of San Giacomo, for which the said [heirs] have entered a claim."[2] On account of this last rumour, which was false, and on account of another rumour, true,

[1] Giacomo deposed: "I cannot say 80,000 (scudi), but I know it was a great debt."

[2] Archives of State of Modena, Chancellery of the Dukedom of Este: *Avvisi e notizie dall' estero*, Roma: B. a6. Avviso of 26 Sept. 1598.

that many documents had remained in the hospital, the creditors obtained from Monsignor Cavalieri, judge of that hospital, permission to verify everything and make an inventory. Naturally Giacomo, Bernardo and Paolo Cenci went also; they found the creditors there before them. On one point the documents are silent. Bernardo tells us that the creditors harshly told the brothers that at La Petrella "an enquiry was on foot into the death of their father."

Meanwhile the suits became ever more entangled, and continued with alternations of good and bad luck. While on one side the Rota confirmed the trust restriction on the property left by the elder Cristoforo, on the other side the purchase of Tor Carbone was declared valid by the Rotulo; rightfully enough, for it was bound by no trust restriction, having been acquired by Francesco Cenci on June 28, 1574. Then when Francesco's will was published, the institutions benefited began to claim their due. Fra' Santi da Piperno, warden of the Capuchins of San Bonaventura demanded that share of the bequest left to his monastery for the purpose of providing dowries for a number of girls. He asserted that four had already been selected.

Giacomo was striving as best he might to rid himself of Olimpio; but Olimpio's domineering manner and noisy, impudent menaces grew out of all measure. Aware that henceforth the lives and the honour of the Cencis lay at his mercy, he shamelessly turned his advantage to account. Not merely was his daughter, Vittoria, living permanently in the Cenci household, but he too had taken up his quarters there and considered himself as part of the family, and on an equal footing with its members.

His liaison with Beatrice finally reached such a pitch of effrontery as to stir even Giacomo's sluggish conscience. When Giacomo was confronted with Camillo Rosati on the witness stand, Camillo asked him: "Signor Giacomo, did you not seek me asking that I should strive to get Olimpio out of Rome for the honour of the house?" And Giacomo was forced to confess: "Olimpio

came to Rome to my house where he remained with my sister as a husband; and seeing this, I fell into a very bad opinion of this Olimpio, and I many times spoke my mind to my sister." Again: "It is true that I said [to Rosati] that I would he might, out of his kindness, remove Olimpio far off, and I did this truly that something anent the honour of my sister might not become public . . . what with all the secret parleys she was having with Olimpio, the two always at each other's ears, babbling together, and I, fretful for her honour, said to my sister that I would fain chase out this Olimpio from the house, and would she be pleased not to grant him so much freedom, for we were not at La Petrella now, we were in Rome. And once when Olimpio was in the room, he heard me speaking thus plainly to my sister." At this Olimpio had let out a tremendous threat, saying: "If I do not kill this fellow ('meaning myself,' says Giacomo who reports the words) we will never make an end of this business!" Beatrice, and later Lucrezia, supplicated Giacomo "to bear well in mind that Olimpio had killed Signor Francesco; and when I heard this, I began to hold my peace, and for our honour would not send away Olimpio." Still worse: "I cried aloud and screamed because I could not debar Beatrice from speaking secretly all day long with Olimpio in our house in Rome, and Beatrice would say to me: 'You must do every courtesy to Olimpio, else you will be my ruin.'" Again: "I did him no courtesy, for I could not bear the sight of him." Since the ladies had returned after a few days to the common table; Giacomo made them leave once more and began gingerly to suggest to "Signor Abate Caetano . . . of Beatrice's kin," that it was essential to lose no time in finding her a husband.

Nor did Olimpio scruple to make use of Beatrice's difficult situation for his own private ends. He petitioned his lord, Marzio Colonna, in her name, to prevent his being arrested, so that the news of their relationship might not come to light. But Colonna replied "that as regards honour he would have kept the business hid, but

more than this was at stake." We should note that all these intimate revelations are reluctantly given. All, even Moscato, forbore as far as possible to touch on so painful a theme. It was repugnant to every one in those days to confess or to own that the daughter of a noble had given herself to a man of base and vulgar origin.

But the Cenci were destined to submit to much more from Olimpio and to do much more for him.

As we know, Olimpio had in 1590 slain an inn-keeper at Macel de' Corvi, and had escaped the death penalty by taking refuge, under the protection of Colonna, in the Kingdom of Naples, in no other place than La Petrella. Therefore he should have been seized on his reappearance in Rome; but we have seen with what audacity he had repaired thither and remained at will, frequenting even the busiest quarters of the city. Pomella met him in the piazza Santi Apostoli, in the piazza Navoni and elsewhere. Yet to avoid all danger, he took pains to force the Cenci, by his accustomed method of blackmail, to buy his freedom. That story will soon be told. Entering Rome under the shadow of a new crime, he demanded the remission of the preceding one!

In fact, when Marzio Catalano came to Rome later and found his old accomplice living in the Cenci palace and wandering freely about the city, his surprise was great, and he asked Olimpio how he dared do it. Olimpio answered him that Giacomo Cenci had bestirred himself to arrange matters by obtaining for him the remission of his previous condemnation, so that he might establish himself in Rome, bring his wife and son there, and put them in the Cenci household, where his daughter Vittoria was already living.

It was of course a lie of Olimpio's, that Giacomo bore him such good will. Bernardo says: "Olimpio being at table one morning with Giacomo, Paolo and myself, he made advances to us that we should do him the service of paying fifty scudi for him to the Company of Tailors," for the remission of the penalty just mentioned. Cesare

Cenci amplifies the incident: "It was a month after we had returned from La Petrella, or a month and a half maybe," when Olimpio showed him a petition and spoke of the aid he had requested from Giacomo and Bernardo. "And this was at the time when the Company had the privilege of releasing a prisoner for their saint's day, which I think was St. Omobono."

Such indeed was the case. This Confraternity, as well as certain others, had obtained the right to set one prisoner a year free on the day of its patron saint (Nov. 13); it had turned this privilege to its own benefit by conferring it at the price of fifty scudi.

The Cenci brothers again were too weak to oppose Olimpio's pretensions; they indorsed a letter by which they authorised Mario Fano to disburse the required sum. This individual was an uncle of the Cenci, through having married a sister of their mother, Ersilia Santacroce; he was then in his early sixties. Tommaso di Federico de' Federici, steward of the Cenci, saw them sign the order; he adds: "Signor Mario returned it to me and told me that he had paid this money and that he had a receipt for it from the men of the Company."

We may also record the words of Orazio Pomella, who had his fingers in this affair, as in so much of the Cenci's business: "When I had heard of the rescript of the most Illustrious Signor Cardinal Aragona, then Legate in Rome, I went to Giacomo, Bernardo and Paolo, for all three had prayed me to do so, and I said to them: 'See, here is the petition with the Signor Cardinal Legate's rescript that he is content that this culprit be pardoned. Who pays the money?' They said to me: 'We will speak to Mario Fano to make out this document.'" Olimpio was present on this occasion.

Here Pomella went at great length into the devious procedure by which he brought what may be called this bureaucratic intrigue to a successful end. He went first to his brother Aurelio, enjoining him to have the document made out as the authorities of the Company required. "Messer Mazzoni, notary at the Capitol, in the

Gipponari," drew it up. Then Aurelio took it to Orazio, who submitted it for signature to Giacomo and Bernardo and brought it the following morning to Mario Fano, who declared that he would pay it, as in fact he did.

Fano himself tells why the Cenci had recourse to him: "I hold in lease from the late Signor Francesco Cenci two properties in the Transteverina, outside the Porta San Pancrazio, and I pay 2200 scudi yearly therefor; and many years since, that is, when Signor Francesco was in prison, one hundred scudi a month were assigned to Signor Giacomo Cenci and eighty each to Cristoforo and Rocco Cenci by the Rota and by the Auditor of the Camera. And by order of the Auditor of the Camera I have made these payments constantly. Therefore when an order was made out to me signed by Signor Giacomo and his brother, Bernardo, that I should pay fifty scudi on their account to the Company of Tailors, since this Company had obtained from the Lord Governor of Rome the pardon of Olimpio Calvetti, Roman, for a homicide committed by Olimpio on the person of Angelo, inn-keeper at Macello de' Corvi, for which they said that Olimpio was condemned to pain of death, and for the furtherance of which order they brought me also a document of that Company, I accordingly declared that I was holding as a deposit these fifty scudi, which indeed I did pay afterwards to Aurelio Pomella."

The ceremony of pardon carried with it the stipulation that the recipient should march in the procession which the Company organised on St. Omobono's day. However, he might send a substitute, under exceptional circumstances, if a forfeit were paid. It is needless to say that the Cenci, and Pomella as their agent, of necessity made such an arrangement, such a fine gentleman as Olimpio scorning to show himself in public in the humble rôle of the pardoned assassin! Pomella found a substitute to whom one scudo was paid. On November 13, 1598, Olimpio was set free of all restraint throughout Rome. Just eight days before, as we shall now see, he had been indicted for the murder of Signor Francesco. Not without

reason did Paruta complain that the administration of justice was out of joint!

The rumours that Francesco Cenci had been assassinated had made their way to Rome and had become so widespread that the courts could hardly fail to heed them. On November 5 an official investigation was begun, but was prosecuted languidly, almost as a matter of form; perhaps it was instituted only to forestall any reproof from Clement VIII when he should return from Ferrara.

It appears from the Brazzà manuscript (though its first three pages are mutilated) that the first to be examined was Giacomo Cenci; the day must have been November 14; on the same day Beatrice also was interrogated. It was a Saturday. On Monday the 16th Lucrezia and the Bolognese coachman, Giacomo di Giovanni, were questioned. It pleased the Cenci to assert that the trial had been instigated through the machinations of Luzio Savelli, on account of his forced surrender of Antonina's dowry; they blamed also the malignity of their creditors.

Giacomo's examination took place in his palace at the Monte de' Cenci. He stated that he had learned of his father's death from the letter written by Attilio Ferretti; that he had gone to La Petrella to fetch the ladies; that his father was killed by falling from the balcony. "They say that he fell on an elder tree, that his head struck it, and that one of those great spines entered his temple." Giacomo gave other details not bearing on the case; among them the statement that at the moment of his deposition his sister was in the very palace where his interrogation was taking place. He gave a pledge to remain in his own house as a place of detention, under a forfeit of 50,000 scudi, and signed his testimony.

The examining judge passed to Beatrice; she declared that she did not even know why she was being examined. Her father had fallen from the balcony, which had collapsed under his feet. At her stepmother's call she had

run and seen the body lying below, without knowing if her father was alive or dead. She had not gone to the church of La Petrella where he was buried, but she had arranged that all due honours should be paid the remains. She, too, spoke of unimportant matters; she was also "confined to the house" under the same forfeit as her brother. She subscribed: "I, Beatrice, have told the truth in all the above."

On Monday, November 16 (while Olimpio, as we shall see, was on his way to La Petrella), Domiziano Pasqualoni, Substitute Prosecutor, and Boezio Giunta, Substitute Magistrate, went to the house of Francesco Velli's heirs in Trastevere to question Lucrezia. She was dwelling there in the house of her first husband. She talked of Francesco's fall from the balcony of "rickety wood," and continued to alter the details. She was "dressing in the bedroom," fully three rooms distant. She learned of the calamity as she was going about the apartments, by looking out at the balcony. She called Beatrice and Giorgio. Then they began to scream, and "almost all La Petrella" came running up. Those who descended to the spot where Francesco had fallen found him dead. It took two hours to extricate him! She had not seen him again; the archpriest told her that he had closed the dead man's mouth and eyes, and also that into one temple had "entered a great elder thorn which had passed into his brain." She had not gone to see the body, being unwilling to abandon Beatrice, of whom "she was taking care!" The examination concluded with a prohibition against leaving her apartment, even to descend to other rooms in the same house, under forfeit of 5,000 scudi.

Naturally the coachman, Giacomo, was not so deferentially treated. He had committed no crime, but he was not of high birth; therefore on the morning of the 16th he was arrested, whisked off to gaol and interrogated. He began by giving a lengthy catalogue of Giacomo Cenci's domestics. He said that Giorgio had entered the service of the Ospedale dei Genovesi, and that the body servant,

Girolamo, had been lying ill since November 4 in the Hospital of the Fatebenefratelli.[1]

For the first time in the interrogatories a question was asked about Olimpio. The witness described his appearance and mentioned his frequentation of the house of the Cenci. Witness had been there the evening before and had heard him announce that he was on the point of going back to La Petrella. He ate with Signor Giacomo; sometimes also with the solicitor (Silla Morico), "according as it may befall." As for his quarters at night, the witness, as we have seen, concluded with the words: "I do not know who he sleeps with—it is none of my business!"

Here finished the first phase of the trial. The examining judge confined himself to a few questions; he did not yet know the will of Clement VIII, and he did not possess any main "elements of fact"; for neither Querco nor Tirone had yet gone to La Petrella.

Olimpio arrived at La Petrella on November 17 or 18.[2] Naturally there was much talk there still about the manner of Francesco Cenci's death; indeed, there was hardly talk of anything else. Gradually, by juxtaposition of all the known facts, the different phases of the crime had been reconstructed in logical and perfect sequence.

Plautilla and Porzia, who had remained there, had heard the open accusations against their husbands, for, as Don Salvati related, "every house was full of them." The ploughman, Lelio Antonelli, of Poggio Vittiano, a connection of Marzio in a certain sense (he was living in concubinage with Girolama, Marzio's sister), deposed: "It has been said and is now said publicly both in Cicoli and in all the other places, and also in Poggio Vittiano, my own village, and it is commonly held that . . . Signor Francesco was slain by Olimpio, castellan of La Petrella . . . and by Marzio, my connection, and that the women

[1] The Brotherhood of Good Deeds.—*Trans.*

[2] We may recall that the coachman Giacomo di Giovanni testified on November 16 that the evening before Olimpio had said he was about to depart for La Petrella.

of this Signor Francesco who were in the castle lent a hand to it, and the way that they took to kill him, it is said, was to strike him on the head with a little hatchet." He went on, giving the names of some who had spoken to him of it.

What most irritated the inhabitants of La Petrella, in their simple and upright sense of justice, was that none of the authorities had appeared to make any investigation of a crime so evident, and that the guilty were escaping without punishment. How profound is the phrase of Francesco Giucciardini: "the common people feels itself less offended by a breach of liberty than by a breach of justice!" Thus the folk of La Petrella, directing their complaints ever higher, came to accuse the Visconte di Cicoli, Captain of the region, of acquiescence in the crime, and to report that he had exclaimed: "I hope those ladies will be able to go their way in peace; and that no one may trouble them about the death of Signor Francesco." Certainly the viscount, after a hasty glance at the naked body of the murdered man, had affirmed that no other wound had been discovered on it save one in the head, caused by an elder thorn! A Royal Commissioner had, to be sure, arrived in the Cícolano, but it was in order to seize and bring to Naples from San Salvatore di Fiamignano, Giovanni and Sestilio Muzzi of Incricca, accused of a quite different crime. He had not paid the slightest attention to the "La Petrella killing," of which every one was talking.

Thus no one had yet been sent to La Petrella when Olimpio reappeared there. Well aware of all the accusations which were being levelled at him, he re-entered the castle and sought to destroy certain traces which, he thought, might prove compromising. He did his task, as usual, badly. He called in a Lombard mason who dwelt in Staffoli, one Lattanzio d'Alessandro, and ordered him to wall up the window, which we know so well, of the so-called prison above the wilderness. He then attempted to augment the damage to the balcony as far as the set-off on which it partly rested would permit; finally he had the

door which gave access to the balcony partly walled up so as to convert it into a window.

At the same time Plautilla took two mattresses from the castle and carried them, first to the baronial palazzo of the Colonna, where she lived, and then to the house of her uncle, Massimo Gasperini, the apothecary, where she already had left the wool. She kept one of these mattresses for herself; she told her uncle and her sister, Artemisia, that they might take the other one. She left a third mattress in the castle, locked in a chest.

At last Biagio Querco, auditor or commissioner, charged by Marzio Colonna, the overlord, with making investigations concerning the crime and the culprits, made his tardy appearance at La Petrella.

Immediately on his arrival he commanded Olimpio to bring him the keys of the castle in his possession. Olimpio sent them by another hand and himself promptly departed. Marzio Catalano also took flight. The whole village cried: "Behold the final proof of guilt!" The pair hastened out of the Kingdom by different paths, each in ignorance of the other's movements. Marzio, pursued by his besetting terror, went wandering among the mountains; Olimpio returned to Rome; when he learned that the judge was not proceeding with the examinations, he again took up quarters in the Cenci palace. He had been there but a few days when Marzio Catalano appeared. Catalano came with a relative of his (a certain Paolo Salvi) who had tallow candles to sell. Brought before his accomplices, he demanded money. He spoke with Beatrice in the presence of Lodovica Cenci; he spoke with Giacomo, then with Olimpio. Olimpio said to him: "Leave all to me; I will get you full satisfaction; let this fury of Biagio Querco spend itself." Beatrice said: "Be not alarmed; remain a little in some safe place; have patience, and all will be arranged. Once matters are arranged, you will be satisfied."

Olimpio did not hide his annoyance at this unlooked for visit from the unhappy, querulous, discontented Catalano. He expressed once more to Beatrice his opinion that it

would be well to murder the man to remove all danger, but once more Beatrice set her face against dealing to Marzio the fate that was destined to overtake Olimpio.

Marzio, angry, feeling he was being tricked, departed from Rome, though it was impossible just then to return to La Petrella, where Biagio Querco still lingered. He roamed in despair about the mountains in the region bounded by Poraglia, Ascrea and Poggio Vittiano (where Querco had already sought for him). As a shield against the cold wind already scourging the solitary mountain ways, he still wore on his back the dead man's cloak!

Biagio Querco, immediately on arriving at La Petrella, had a notice affixed "on an angle of the Piazza," ordering all who "might have property of Signor Francesco or of Olimpio Calvetti" to declare them, under a severe penalty. Following information given him, he then made, in person or by delegates, a perquisition of the Baronial palazzo and of the house of the apothecary Gasperini. The two mattresses and the blood-stained wool were discovered; he had them taken back to the castle and locked in a room. He had already shut up in the castle a few petty delinquents.

He questioned many folk of La Petrella at length, and held long discussions with them, concerning both the injuries to the balcony and the alterations that Olimpio had apparently caused to be made as soon as he had reappeared in the castle. It was at this point that the old priest, Don Scossa, also examined the balcony. He had not climbed so far as the castle since Cenci's death. He said, on inspecting the flooring: "It is said up and down La Petrella that Olimpio Calvetti had it broken down; and I also have seen the door of this balcony now walled half-way up, and would say that Olimpio had it walled up . . . so that none should recognise the place and the hole through which the ladies said Francesco had fallen."

Querco, unconvinced by the information given by the Viscount of Cicoli concerning Cenci's body, finally asked permission of the Rural Vicar, Don Ascanio Fontana, of

Cicoli, to exhume it. The request was granted. The arch-priest confessed: "I declined to be present at all to see it. Had I seen it, I would not have been able to eat afterwards." A prudent and fastidious soul!

A few days later Querco left La Petrella, and Marzio, promptly informed of the fact, returned. But he was received with abhorrence and held at arm's length. Hearing that Carlo Tirone, Royal Commissioner, was on his way, he made off again to Ascrea. Porzia also repaired in terror to Poggio Vittiano, first to the house of her mother-in-law (Cristina, Catalano's mother, who had remarried there), then to the house of Lelio Antonelli, her "connection."

Olimpio, meantime, little concerned about the investigation which had begun, and caring little for the fact that the Cenci were prisoners in their palace, remained composedly with them. More than ever was he master of Beatrice, soul and body, and a terror to Giacomo, whom he had menaced with death; his mastery over Lodovica was likewise complete. Bernardo and Paolo remained bound to him by the friendship they had formed at La Petrella and by the aid he had lent them in their escape from that place. That he held these younger brothers of Beatrice in real affection is proved by his vigilant and constant assistance to Paolo when the boy was ill with malignant fever, then so frequent in Rome. Olimpio would pass nights beside Paolo's bed and "tend" him; and when his brother, Pietro Calvetti, a friar at La Minerva, told him that there was a miraculous relic against fever in his church, Olimpio insisted on his brother bringing it to Paolo's bedside.

"As I was a sacristan at La Minerva," testified Fra' Pietro, "Olimpio came to find me, and he said to me: 'Signor Paolo, son of Signor Francesco Cenci, is very ill in bed with the fever.' And then I said to him: 'Oh, we have a relic of blessed St. Vincent which cures the fever.' Then said Olimpio: 'Get it and bring it along.' So I took that relic along with the sacristan named Padre Fra' Tommaso Marini, and we both carried that relic to

the house of Signor Giacomo Cenci, and Olimpio had gone before us into the house; and we found this Signore Paolo in company with Signora Lucrezia and Signora Beatrice; and so we had the candles lit, and we all knelt and a prayer was said, and we had the sick person kiss the relic, and then all the women and Olimpio too kissed it, and when we had made that prayer, myself and the father sacristan went away, and Olimpio remained."

Yet Olimpio, after having twice postponed the journey, was obliged to abandon Paolo's bedside to go and once more take the journey to La Petrella. He purposed, among other things, to bring back Plautilla and his small son, Prospero. Out of prudence, however, he told a doctor, in the sickroom and in the presence of Pomella, that he was going to Zagarolo.

Before dealing with this journey, we may mention that Paolo's illness grew steadily worse; he died on December 8,[1] after several days' illness.[2] He was about sixteen years old, having been born January 23, 1583. "The physicians were Zecca, of Padua, Messer Angelo of Bagnorea,[3] a doctor named Messer Giovannantonio and another named Grillo; the apothecary was one whose shop is in the piazza Giudea or by the church of Madonna del Pianto."

All these attentions and the throng of physicians called to Paolo's pillow, as well as the recourse to the relic, give the lie to the tale of late origin that Paolo was poisoned by Beatrice, Giacomo and Olimpio in order that he might not with boyish indiscretion tell awkward stories. Are the proven crimes not sufficient without seeking still others?[4]

These various events: Paolo's death (fortunate one almost conceives him, to be snatched away from the doom

[1] Beatrice testified: "He died before the eve of St. Thomas," or before December 19; Giacomo said: "On Sunday, a few days before Christmas." The death certificate states precisely, Dec. 8.

[2] Bernardo said, 25 or 26 days; Beatrice, 6 or 7.

[3] The famous physician of St. Philip Neri. *Alfonso Capecelatro: La Vita di S. Filippo Neri.* (Rome, 1889). Vol. II, pp. 565 and 627.

[4] Rinieri puts his trust for his unfounded accusation in the Vatican *Ristretto* (abstract), which he himself admits as posterior to 1632.

overhanging his house!), the death of Antonina, the initiation of the legal inquiry into their father's death, the questioning of Giacomo and Beatrice, as well as Lucrezia, the recollection of their brothers' violent deaths, the looming terror of imprisonment—all this must have filled the spirits of the Cenci with a sense of anguished apprehension.

God's curse had fallen upon their house; He must needs be appeased. They order from Giacomo delle Pozze, banner-maker, "several ells of crimson sarsenet" with their crest and a border of gold lace; they send it as a votive offering to the church of La Madonna del Pianto; and in their church of San Tommaso are sung requiem masses for the dead till now so neglected. But Justice is on its way; though some chance may retard it, nothing shall arrest it henceforth, nor any prayers turn it from its predestined course.

We left Olimpio setting forth from Rome about December 5,[1] taking the direct road to La Petrella. When he was near Poggio Vittiano he fell in with Porzia, wife of Catalano; she was wearing the dress which Francesco Cenci had once held as a security, and which Marzio had had restored to him after the crime.

"I met him riding his horse," she said,[2] "on the Poggio-Vittiano road, which goes to a fountain beyond Poggio castle, and while I was going along the road to wash some clothes at the fountain, which is somewhat removed from the gate, near some threshing-floors, he was passing . . . and seeing him, I began to upbraid him, telling him that he was the cause of dislodging me and my man, and that we might not abide in our house; and he answered: 'What devil has taken you? What ails you? Why can you

[1] Paino said, about 3 or 4 days before Paolo's death. According to Pomella, 6 or 7 days.

[2] Porzia says that this encounter took place when Olimpio had left La Petrella; on the contrary it was on his journey thither, not on his return; this is proved by the fact that Olimpio was alone; on his return to Rome he was accompanied by Plautilla and his baby son Prospero. Further it is evident from his dialogue with Porzia that he had not yet spoken again with Marzio, as he did on St. Lucia's day, December 13.

not abide in your house, you and your man? Who troubles you?' And I answered him: 'I know well that we cannot abide there.' And after replying to me many times: 'Who forbids you? Why do you not stay there?' he said to me: 'Where is Marzio?' I answered him that he was at Ascrea; he replied: 'What is he doing there?' and I told him that he was there teaching the boys of my lady to play upon the lute; and Olimpio said to me then: 'Bid Marzio from me to come to Olevano to work at his trade,' for my husband is a tinker; and he said that two others from La Petrella, one named Marco Tullio de Pasquale and the other Giuseppe de Giovan Francesco of La Petrella, were going also to Olevano. I answered him: 'Why would you have him come to Olevano?' He answered: 'Tell him to come, for he will be well off there.' Then he went his way." Afterwards she learned that "the said Marco Tullio and Giuseppe did not go to Olevano to work at all."

On December 13, at La Petrella, Olimpio saw Catalano again. As usual, the encounter was a luckless one. "On the day of Santa Lucia just passed," deposes Marzio on January 17, 1599, "I spoke to Olimpio at La Petrella whither he had returned for his wife." Olimpio counselled him "to take himself off for a few days so that he should not fall into the hands of Signor Carlo Tirone." Marzio continues: "In case I should be taken, I was to take good heed to say nothing . . . about aught which could affect him; and I made no answer to him, but to myself I said, in my heart: 'Pray God I fall not into the hands of the courts!' . . . And there was no more between us."

This dialogue took place before the church of La Petrella "called Santa Maria [where the murdered man was buried], and no one else was present; I was passing by to go to the house of a kinsman of mine; and I went up to Olimpio in all honesty and told him what I was doing, and he spoke to me the words I have reported."

It was the last time the two ever saw one another.

Olimpio spoke with others while at La Petrella. He impudently told the canonical priest Salvati, that he had

come "to get his wife and son by order of Signor Biagio (Querco)." [1]

He was back in Rome with his wife and child a few days before Christmas, probably December 21; he left them "in the house of a woman named Cinzia . . . who had married a man named Giustino, a laundryman, from outside Rome."

Meanwhile new proceedings against Olimpio and his accomplices were instituted, on December 4th, by the Royal Tribunal of the Abruzzo Region. On the tenth Don Herzio de Guzman, Count of Olivares, the Viceroy, had sent orders from Naples to Carlo Tirone, Auditor of the Provinces of Abruzzo, to take into custody "the delinquent murderers of Francesco Cenci at La Petrella and to give them fit punishment"; they had been bluntly designated "by the officials of the Most Illustrious Marzio Colonna, lord of the aforementioned town," to be "the wife and daughter of deceased, with a castellan of the fortress." The order continued: "We order and direct you . . . that you remove yourself to that village of La Petrella and to all other places which shall seem to you convenient and necessary. The delinquents, accomplices, and instigators and those whom you may deem guilty you shall essay to lay hands upon, and those whom you shall not be able to take you shall cite *ad informandum* and *ad capitula*, fixing a brief limit for them in which to appear." He concluded with a statement requiring "titular and nontitular barons, governors, auditors, physicians . . . and all men and persons whatsoever" to lend aid and comfort to Tirone, in the accomplishment of his mission.

Carlo Tirone, whose name alone was sufficient to arouse terror, received this order at Chieti, and promptly journeyed to La Petrella; he arrived about the 20th. He immediately set to work, so that Captain Giovan Francesco Rosa, of Aquila, castellan of Assergi, was able to send the following information to Giacomo Cenci before the end

[1] Don Salvati also gives the exact date, saying that Olimpio was at La Petrella on the 12th or 13th of December.

of December: "Carlo Tirone is in charge at La Petrella, and he has summoned Santi de Pompa and Giovan Battista [both of Assergi]. Santi could not go there, being sick; Giovan Battista has gone."

From other sources news came to Cesare Cenci about this time that the Royal Courts were instituting proceedings on the ground that Francesco had not fallen from the balcony, but had been murdered and thrown down. This information was given to Cenci by "a herdsman of the commune of Cicola. . . . He wished to buy my hay; I do not know his name. . . . He is a young man, chestnut-bearded, and he is kin to Sestilio of Cicoli;[1] I think he lives at Castel Fiano." Cesare went with the herdsman to the piazza de' Cenci; he mounted to Giacomo's quarters and warned him of what he had learned. He did not, however, inform him that the herdsman was waiting below. Giacomo pretended to receive the news with amazement, but he indicated no desire to speak to the herdsman. Cesare then told his wife, Giustiniana, the news; Giustiniana crossed herself!

At La Petrella Tirone did not take up lodgings in the castle, but "in a house of Don Ratilio, deceased." After having the castle gates reopened, as well as the room wherein Querco had collected the confiscated articles, he had these objects removed to his own quarters. It was there likewise that Don Marzio Tommasini observed one of the bloody mattresses; he did not, however, notice the wool, although they told him that it had been brought there as well. Don Marzio saw the bloody mattress while on a visit to Tirone's lodgings to intercede for two prisoners of La Petrella who were being held in the same case: his friend, Durante di Dionisio (the same who informed Bernardo, on his arrival at La Petrella, of the fall from the balcony), and Sartorio, the Cenci's servant, an old acquaintance of ours. Tirone, who was keeping them in a bedroom under guard, received Don Marzio, and said to him: "Look there, arch-priest! This is one of

[1] This was the same Sestilio di Prospero who aided Scocchino to lift Francesco's body out of the wilderness.

Signor Francesco's mattresses, on which he slept; it is all bloody. Just look and see if they removed the mark which was used on his property." The arch-priest looked. "And I saw that the mark was destroyed from that mattress; and they showed me a pillow, saying: 'Here is the mark; it is on his pillow'; and I saw that there was a mark on that pillow."

Tirone's investigation then passed to the balcony and the walled-up window below. As he had learned that the mason, Lattanzio, had been seen working with Olimpio in the castle, he immediately summoned the man from Staffoli and examined him. The mason confessed that he had done damage to the balcony, had partly walled up the door which opened on it, and had sealed the window of the prison overlooking the wilderness. Tirone had the window reopened. This last "discovery," which revealed Olimpio's means of access to the castle, caused much excitement in the village.

Don Salvati adds that Tirone succeeded also in identifying Olimpio's hatchet "in a tool-box; it had a cutting edge on one side and on the other had a sharp point, that is, a piece of iron such as those hatchets commonly have . . . and this tool-box was in the house of Massimo Gasparino, Olimpio's uncle, and they said that Plautilla had brought the tool-box there . . . for I have heard this publicly said by the folk of La Petrella and also by the soldiers of Signor Carlo Tirone." However this fact was not confirmed.

At this point Tirone also made a search for Catalano; he had no difficulty in learning that he was at Ascrea. He then summoned some of Catalano's relatives: Orazio di Filippo Calvi, Porzia's uncle; a cousin of Catalano, Marco Tullio di Pasquale; a certain Matteo di Barnaba; and one Giordano; he bade these men go to Ascrea and persuade Catalano to return to La Petrella to testify before Tirone concerning the death of Cenci. They went to Ascrea on December 25; they found Porzia there as well; she had come from Poggio Vittiano the day before to spend Christmas with her husband. The four men assured Mar-

zio "on the word of Signor Carlo Tirone, that if he told the truth about the death of Francesco Cenci, Signor Carlo would obtain a pardon for him."

Catalano says Orazio told him that Tirone had given his word to do no harm to Catalano, but to give him a free pardon on condition that he would tell all he knew. "And he also said," Marzio testified, "that Signor Carlo [Tirone] wished to examine my wife. I was content that my wife should go to be examined, as indeed she did go; but I would not go there, for I put no trust in Orazio's words, and I said to him: 'Have some gentleman give me his word, and I will come.' So this Orazio went off, taking with him my wife, but I would not go there."

The four returned to La Petrella on Saturday, December 26, taking Porzia with them. She was examined by Tirone and remained in the village several days.

But it was not Porzia that Tirone wanted; it was Catalano. If he sent her back to Poggio Vittiano, it was to entice Catalano by demonstrating that he released the witnesses once his word to do so was given.

Orazio Calvi and Marco Tullio accompanied Porzia to Poggio Vittiano; they sent Lelio Antonelli from that place to Ascrea with a letter which he put into Marzio's hands. Marzio set out with Lelio and a youth of Ascrea; but when he had come "less than a musket-shot from Poggio Vittiano," near a wayside shrine, he was seized with terror of an ambush and would not proceed. He told Lelio to rejoin Calvi and Marco Tullio, and tell them that if they had any communication to make to him, they should come to the place where he then stood. Orazio and Marco complied. "Orazio told me," continues Marzio, "that Signor Carlo wished to speak to me, and that he had sent to Naples, or was going to send there, for a warrant for me, since he wanted to examine me. I answered that I did not want to go on their word alone; but let some gentleman give me his word and I would go there. Finally they consented that the notary, Giovanni Jannoccio, of Cittaducale should give me his word."

Meanwhile, after Christmas, Tirone had Francesco

Cenci's tomb reopened, with the permission of the Rural Vicar. He exhumed the body, and without any scruple had the head removed for examination. This time also Don Tommasini, again not wishing to spoil his appetite, refused to be present at the vault. A certain Sante di Giovanni, who was present, testified that Tirone "had the doctor from Cicoli and the surgeons, one from Antrodoco and the other from Cittaducale, certify to the head"; he described the wounds with relative accuracy, and concluded that they were evidently "wounds and blows of a hatchet . . . as the doctors also recognised them to be."

This latest and most damning examination of Cenci's head induced Tirone to imprison "the recorder of the Viscount" of the court at Cicoli, because he had granted the order for burial so lightly, after a superficial, if not culpable, verification of the corpse. This procedure had strengthened the people of La Petrella in their belief that the Viscount wished to shield the Cenci women.

Finally, Tirone issued formal proclamation against Olimpio, Marzio, their wives, the wife and daughter of Francesco Cenci, and his sons, Giacomo and Bernardo. These were denounced as the persons who had either plotted or executed the crime.

And Marzio Catalano—what was he doing at Ascrea? He tells us that he found ten youths there who desired to learn to dance and to play the guitar and the lute.

Can any greater contrast be imagined than between the art Marzio had chosen to teach and the anguish that must have filled his mind. Then as now the pleasant village custom was for young men and boys to go forth at night along country roads, raising the pure chill mountain echoes with light-hearted song and dance. So Marzio led his joyous troop, accompanying their songs on his lute, beating their cadence with his foot upon the frozen moonlit ground. And from his shoulders, as a protection from the cold, still hung the cloak of the murdered man.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT FLOOD

Clement VIII had been absent from Rome ever since April 12, 1598. From the time his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, had entered Ferrara as general of the expedition sent to wrest that city from Cesare d'Este (successor to Alfonso II, dead without issue) the pontiff had known but one desire—to go in person to Ferrara. He arrived there, fêted and honoured, on May 8th; he remained more than seven months, "to regulate the government of that city" and to solemnise royal nuptials. His departure took place on November 26th. The news of the occupation of Ferrara had been hailed with enthusiasm in the Eternal City: no sooner did the Romans know that their Pope was about to return than they prepared for him the triumph due a conqueror: among many things neglected in consequence was the administration of justice. The city was sumptuously decorated and adorned with triumphal arches; ceremonies were rehearsed, and the days passed in feverish anticipation. Clement's journey homeward proceeded slowly. He halted at many places throughout his dominions, and continued bad weather had made the roads heavy going. Finally, on December 20th, he arrived outside Rome. On the morning of that day a long procession, composed of the entire clergy, the confraternities and magistrates of Rome, bore to the basilica of St. Peter's the sacred coffer containing the Host which the Pope had sent on in advance of his train. The populace lined the route on both sides: two dromedaries and an immense number of mules laden with baggage closed the cortege. In the afternoon Clement entered on horseback, together with his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandino, Legate of Ferrara, and another nephew, Giovanni Francesco Aldobrandino, lately promoted general in the papal

army. The Pontiff was wont to lament the accusations of nepotism brought against him by his subjects, and to protest that he was merely studying the interests of the Church! "By this excuse, which was not asked of him [wrote Paruta at the time], he seemed to be making excuses for his own conscience, as though knowing that it had need of justification. Indeed men were only the more offended by it, the words seeming to infer that he really neglected the interests of these nephews of his, notwithstanding that facts are very much the reverse." Furthermore, it henceforth became a corrupt precedent "straightway to give the highest authority and most influential posts to nephews or other near kin of the Sovereign Pontiff: sometimes without the slightest regard to the age, weakness of character, or lack of ability of those upon whom such grave responsibilities were laid."

Little by little the conduct of "affairs" was falling into the hands of Cardinal Aldobrandino. The very part assigned him in the conquest of Ferrara was a proof of his uncle's predilection.

Giovanni Dolfin, successor to Paruta as Venetian Ambassador to the court of Clement VIII, described Clement's other nephew, Cardinal San Giorgio,[1] in a *Relazione* sent to his Republic from Rome, in that same year, 1598. The Cardinal, he said, was "spirited, proud, active, and of good intelligence in business matters," but somewhat "of a bad disposition. . . . The accidents of fortune which have occurred and which have robbed him of the great hopes which were his at the outset of this pontificate have rendered his character such that he shows himself, not only harsh, but reckless with every one." This temper, whether impulsive by nature or whether it had been made so, had led him to acts by which his authority had suffered.

As for the Cardinal Aldobrandino, then hardly twenty-seven, Dolfin wrote that he was "of very noble nature, and as amiable and gracious as words can tell. The whole Court follows his lead, and with good reason, for he is

[1] His name was Cinzio Passeri; he was then 45 years of age.

of utmost authority with the Pope and by him is most tenderly loved." He continued that "so great an emulation" had thence arisen between the two cousins "that if respect for the Pope did not hold them bridled, it would pass into open enmity . . . but Cardinal San Giorgio is beginning to yield place to Cardinal Aldobrandino. He sees plainly that such is the Pontiff's will, whether because of the closer conjunction of their blood, for the latter is of his own house and is his brother's son, whereas the first is a sister's son; or because he confides the more in the second, reckoning him, as he has been many times heard to say, the more dexterous in business; and yet there appears more readiness of wit in Cardinal San Giorgio." [1]

Guido Bentivoglio in his *Memorie* has left us no less interesting glimpses of the two nephews, both Cardinals, of Clement VIII. His words agree in the main with the information given to the Signoria of Venice by its ambassadors. He, too, says that it was at first believed that "Cinzio, as the elder, and esteemed to be of a better aptitude, would prevail over Pietro in the government administration. The Court, holding this opinion, had turned especially to Cardinal Cinzio. Prelates and courtiers gathered round him; great hopes were entertained of him; and to that quarter also would the Ambassadors and the other ministers of the Princes turn, hoping thus to advantage their business. . . . But the court, which is seldom befooled, was this time notably hoodwinked; for the Pope, giving blood its just due, after having seen the talent for affairs grow in Pietro little by little with years, had little by little increased his training, and then had given him greater and greater opportunities; and finally he shewed such superiority in everything that upon my arrival at Court the administration of the Pontificate was managed by Cardinal Aldobrandino with so great an authority, that only a very vain and empty appearance remained to Cardinal San Giorgio."

Bentivoglio then describes the physical appearance of Cardinal Aldobrandino: "Fortune had slighted him at

[1] Paruta, II, p. 516.

birth; he was of a small body and of little nobility of aspect. His face was much pitted with smallpox and his chest had been much ravaged by asthma; the trouble in that region occasioned another in his voice, which was so broken and indistinct that it was necessary to guess at many of his words instead of understanding them. At times he would be so racked by a deep cough that his whole face would become congested and his breath short. None the less he enjoyed quite enough health to sustain the burden of his tasks, and they could hardly be greater; nor did he lack the other qualities most necessary for so great a ministry: vigilance, industry, prudence, vigour of wit and constancy of spirit. He sought to appear also a zealous ecclesiastic; yet by common judgment his cupidity for temporalities far prevailed. It was only too plain that he required absolute submission from those about him; he favoured none but such as professed it; he was inordinately covetous, sensual, and greedy for authority." [1]

Giovan Francesco Aldobrandino, the third nephew, came to be considered rather a man of arms than of business, and was kept in harness. He went no less than three times to the wars against the Turks in Hungary; it was there that he died, at the siege of the fortress of Canissa, a little more than three years after the events with which we are now dealing.

The great procession which traversed Rome to escort the Pope on his "victorious" return from Ferrara included several cardinals, the Governor, all the monastic orders, the clergy of the parochial and collegiate churches, the canons of St. Peter's and the Lateran, the choristers, the officials of the Chancellery and of the People, the militia, the District Leaders, the Keepers of the Archives, the Senator, the Ambassadors, and a great swarm of knights, court officials and citizens. The procession followed the Corso as far as the Palazzo of San Marco; here it turned to the right and passed before the great Crucifix and on to Sant' Andrea della Valle, then fol-

[1] Bentivoglio, *Opere storiche* (Milan, 1807) V., pp. 58-64.

lowed the streets of Pasquino, Parione, and Monte Giordano. As it traversed the Ponte Sant' Angelo, mortars and culverins were discharged in token of joy from the Castello, and fifes, trumpets, kettle-drums and tambours mingled their music with the din. The procession did not arrive by way of Borgo Novo at St. Peter's till about 4 P. M. All the streets swarmed with people; the houses were hung with rugs, tapestries, paintings, inscriptions, and evergreens.

The old cardinals who could no longer ride were waiting in St. Peter's; when the Pope came near the threshold, he dismounted, knelt on a cushion and kissed the cross presented to him by Cardinal Salviati. He then took the aspersorium and sprinkled the bystanders. While he was being censed, the choir began to intone the Te Deum and all advanced toward the high altar.

After other prayers and ceremonies the Pope finally dismissed the Cardinals, and ascended to his own apartments by the sacristy stairs. To all who came his way and fell on their knees, uttering greetings, he said: "Good evening, good evening!" so simply that Mucanzio, the Master of Ceremonies, was moved in recounting the tale! And finally he went to rest "in his own bed of state!" [1]

The long procession, winding its way between cheering throngs, was a sufficiently magnificent sight in itself, but the sun had failed to lend it added lustre. Sullen, cloudy weather kept the streets in gloom. Nevertheless the Roman populace, ever of festive mood, looked forward eagerly to a prolonged period of holiday making. As soon as the functions scheduled for Clement's return were over, Christmas would be at hand, and the celebrations for the New Year would follow. But the sky remained black with clouds. The rain never ceased; at night, especially, it fell in torrents, and a discouraging sirocco blew continuously, giving little hope of a change to fairer weather.

On the very day of Clement's return to Rome the Tiber began to swell, but that day and the following one the

[1] *Talamo*, It.

water did not rise above its banks. On the 22nd it overflowed a little here and there, no rare occurrence, on account of the poor condition and irregular level of the embankments. Monte Brianzo and the "Orso" inn were the first points to be attacked. A little water began to trickle also into the cellars of certain dwellings, especially those near the river; but as this also was a frequent occurrence, little heed was paid to it. It had rained during the summer and the autumn; now one might more than hope—one might be reasonably sure—of fine weather to follow. At such a time of rejoicing no one could spare a thought for floods and calamities. The people were in joyous mood, Jacomo Castiglione tells us. Even when the river still rose, surmounting the embankment at many points—even when a sheet of water covered some streets and poured into cellars and kitchens, the people felt little concern. Crowds lined the banks, laughing and shouting as trees, bushes, straw, debris, and even the bodies of drowned animals were carried past them by the swirling current. At spots distant from the Tiber and beneath the new level of the swollen river crowds stood to watch the water bubbling up from the sluice-gates of the sewers. The sluice-gate at the Arco di Portogallo on the Corso, near the via della Vite, seemed a small fountain. Everything was an occasion for amusement.

On the next day the water mounted steadily through other streets, constantly gaining higher ground. In the early hours of the 24th, Christmas Eve, it rose with fury, strewing the streets with tree-trunks, manure and rubbish from the flooded countryside, broaching barrels of oil and wine in the cellars; destroying earthenware vessels, furniture, utensils, food, and wares of every kind in shops and ground-floor apartments, drowning horses, mules, and other domestic animals in stables and courtyards.

By morning a great part of Rome was under water. Then Cardinal Aldobrandino began to organise and direct the emergency measures. He did not waste time in conferences (partly because communication had become so difficult). He requisitioned the services of all the avail-

able boatmen and sent them with their wherries through the streets and squares, already navigable, to collect the people who seemed to be in greatest peril and to distribute free rations of bread and wine, the cost of which was levied on the well-to-do. Mounted men with saddle-bags packed with food were sent wherever a horse could go. He himself courageously joined the rescuers. Nevertheless, the relief measures remained inadequate. Other cardinals and rich patricians lent their assistance in various parts of the city.

The good Cardinal of Santa Severina, who was at Montecitorio, a place of safety, collected all who had escaped from their houses by swimming or wading and could not return; he gave them asylum in his own palace. The Marchese Peretti, brother of Montalto, gathered together more than five hundred individuals; Cardinal Sauli, in a boat rowed by menservants, brought bread, wine, and other victuals to the sufferers; and when the flood swept two casks of wine into the court of his palace, the story went that God had thus shown "approval of his charitable deed!" Donna Emilia Orsini also performed miracles of charity.

But the scourge did not abate. The skies poured incessantly. A combination of rain and warm winds had melted the snow in the high Umbrian mountains, and every tributary, stream, rivulet and torrent discharged its overflow into the swollen Tiber. One curious detail was noted: at first the people were stricken dumb with terror, and this silence, more appalling than any lamentation or wailing, was so impressive that all the chroniclers of the time mention it. But as the peril grew, cries for aid began to arise on every side, church bells rang the tocsin, terror spread and the cries became more general. The houses in the low-lying districts of Rome were almost completely submerged, especially the little buildings, often mere pent-houses, clinging to the bastion of Gregory XIII at the Castel Sant' Angelo, and clustered along the high viaduct which connects the Castello with the Vatican. Here the inhabitants had climbed to their roofs, buffeted

by wind and rain; the men cursing, the women weeping, the children screaming with terror. All were calling desperately for aid, when the vice-castellan, Amerigo Capponi, "a man endowed with every sort of worthy quality" came to their rescue. He is a figure that will be of interest in our record. As Beatrice's custodian he will make no secret of his sentiment of pity, if not of love, for his hapless captive.

During that night feats of charity were performed by Capponi which, later, when they were made public, compelled the admiration of all Rome. Those who were in the little houses next "the curtain of the moat of Pius IV's fortifications" could escape to the Castello by crossing the roofs and climbing up two ladders, bound end to end and lowered from the high viaduct. But those who were in the little shops on the opposite side of the street, now a deep swift torrent, were marked for certain and speedy death had Capponi's ingenuity not intervened. The water kept rising and in many places had already reached the ridges of the roofs, exciting mad cries of terror and despair from the hapless folk gathered there. Capponi bade a number of his soldiers climb down from the viaduct upon the near-by roofs. He ordered them to throw a long rope across the alley, now little better than a mill-race, he cried to those in danger to seize it and tie it very tight, securing it with knots and turns to a chimney, while the other end was held by the soldiers. The sufferers seemed to be dazed from their peril. He encouraged them to gather all their strength and energy together, to grasp the rope tightly, not to be afraid though they should descend into the water up to their necks or even over their heads; he bade them pull themselves along hand over hand to the other side, where men would reach out for them and carry them to the viaduct. Castiglione says: "Although they were many times seen completely plunged into the water, by reason of the great force of the current, yet they did not abandon the hawser with their hands, alike men and women, and old women, and fathers who had their children bound on their backs.

And so no man perished; rather did very many climb up by that curtain and up the ladder to the Corridor, by which they entered safe into the Castello, where being received with charity and provided with a good fire they dried themselves. Soon after the water was seen to rise so much and with such great violence that it carried away and ruined from the very foundations the houses and shops of those poor folk, who had been rescued and taken into the fortress only just in time. Those soldiers who, at their own very great risk, threw out and held the hawser, merit infinite praise, but they did not deem it so great a peril to liberate others from death, being so well commanded by Signor Americo Capponi, vice-castellan, assuredly worthy of immortal glory." In fact, such a proclamation was made in his regard "by Signor Giovan Francesco Aldobrandino, General of the Holy Church and Castellan."

After this deed Capponi turned to the rescue of many other people crowded on the roofs of the houses and inns scattered about the region called the Vignola, immediately to the east of the Castello, in the area included to-day between the via delle Fosse and the via Triboniano. The water in this section was not flowing violently, as the main current of the river bore toward Tordinona. Capponi could therefore collect those "shipwrecked" people by making several trips in a boat. He had them ascend to the Castello by a ladder lowered "from a cannon-embrasure of a bastion, the lowest of them all, called 'La Staffa'." [1]

It was now evening. The boats could no longer venture forth in the darkness. Nothing was heard but the roar of the waters as they dashed against bridges, walls, houses and churches on every hand. The few lights which till now had remained lit in the streets before the sacred images, were extinguished either by the rising waters or by exhaustion of their oil.

The houses, yielding to the continued crumbling at their foundations, began to fall in ruins; one appall-

[1] "The Stirrup."—*Trans.*

ing crash, followed by the rush of waters invading the wrecked area, was heard from the side of the Palatine Bridge, or Ponte di Santa Maria; from that day it was called the Broken Bridge. The rumour arose that a moment before the horse of Cardinal Aldobrandino had passed that way! At the crash, fugitives who had taken refuge in the bell towers beside San Bartolomeo, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, and Santa Cecilia, began to ring the bells wildly, as if crazed with fear. Even the humble, ancient bells of San Benedetto in Piscinula tinkled desperately. At La Farnosina the walls girdling the gardens collapsed. In La Lungara the walls of the Riario, Massimo and Salviati gardens—in Borgo Novo some houses of the vicolo delle Tre Colonne, near the Convent della Traspontina, crumbled and fell in ruins. The noted tavern, del Giglio, undermined by the waters, slid bodily into the Tiber. Even the two marble parapets of Ponte Sant' Angelo were destroyed; the one on the upstream side fell upon the bridge itself; the other collapsed into the river.

Christmas night, the longest in the year, passed in anxiety and terror; beneath the pallid light of dawn, Rome seemed but a lake between its surrounding hills. The water, still rising, was only arrested, on the left bank of the Tiber, by the slopes of the Pincio, the Quirinal, the Capitoline Hill and the Aventine; on the right bank, by the slopes of Monte Mario, the Vatican, the Gianicolo, and Monte Verde. The waters had submerged all the low ground from Ponte Milvio to the Vatican Belvedere; Borgo and the Square of St. Peter's as far as the stairway of the basilica—La Lungara and the broad Trastevere as far as Porta Portese were under water. On the opposite bank the inundation extended to Via Margutta, to the piazza di Spagna, to Trevi, to the Santi Apostoli; and from San Marco the flood poured down through the dark Botteghe, where only the roof of Santa Lucia still emerged. The waters had risen so far along the via Margana that they covered the Piazza Montanara, the Bocca della Verità, with the island of San Bartolomeo, La Mar-

morata, as far as the meadows of San Paolo, and almost all the highroad to Ostia. Sant' Agostino, Monte Giordano, the Farnese and Capodiferro (later Spada) palaces, Montecitorio, Monte dei Cenci, Monte Savello, il Testaccio and a few other places emerged like islands from the leaden waters.

It was a lamentable Christmas! Neither masses nor vespers were sung in the churches, not even in St. Peter's! Clement VIII wept even more than usual.

All the supplies in the houses were ruined; the river-mills had been either carried away by the current or clogged up with silt or broken; flour had to be awaited from the high country, and bread from the bakers on the hills. Lucky indeed was the Roman household, accustomed to all manner of fine fare, that could add to its bread a little *minestra* or wine on that Christmas Day. A night still more terrible than the previous one was being anticipated when, about evening, word passed from house to house that the current coming from the river showed signs of diminishing in speed. On a few walls a wet streak appeared above the water; then some window-railing, some door-sill emerged, and on every side the water began to flow noisily down the streets.

All spirits rose. The vigil was full of hope. The gurgling, murmuring, roaring of the water escaping through a thousand outlets from the houses it had devastated, made a sound that was almost gay; yet even the flight of the waters was full of traps and fraught with destruction. As they retreated they bore with them houses whose foundations had already been eaten away, and left numberless others seamed, crazy, and tottering.

On the morning of St. Stephen's day (December 26) many of the higher places were already laid bare, and aid to the inhabitants who were marooned in their houses became easier. Many streets could be forded; others were covered only by a thin sheet of water. Cardinal Aldobrandino scoured the city on horseback "with a goodly company of his men and with mules loaded with bread." Carts with foodstuffs also began once more to circulate;

and the following day, St. John the Evangelist's, a Sunday, the terrible Tiber, as though tamed, returned to its bed.

The condition in which it left the city is indescribable. Streets, churches and houses were choked with mud, straw, filth, brush-wood, drowned animals. Here and there, alas, human bodies as well appeared; their number reached the total of 1,500, including those carried in by the river from the countryside, which the Compagnia della Morte found and buried. It was necessary to make repairs with all haste that the cracked edifices might not collapse. The streets were an impassable maze of beams, buttresses and shoring timbers. It seemed "like a forest," said Castiglione. The carters were in despair; they were compelled by special edicts to clean up the streets, houses, and churches, under pain of a fine of ten scudi and three lashes with a rope. An order was therefore published commanding the householders to make their repairs promptly so that the props could be removed. This task of cleaning streets and houses, removing water and silt from the cellars, cleansing the churches, and restoring the bridges was prolonged for weeks and months in the midst of new terrors; for the rain continued ceaselessly, so that on January 8, 1599, we find the river again rising and overflowing its banks in some places.

This time the prospect of being caught in another flood equal to the last, fear of the diseases spread by the unendurable moisture and by the putrefying bodies that poisoned the humid air, drove those who could to live on the high ground on the hills. Soon these fortunate ones were imitated by many of the common people, who burrowed among the ruins of the Baths of Constantine, and found refuge on Montecavallo, on the Aventine, the Pincio, the Gianicolo. They crowded into every wretched hovel, into the monastery cloisters, the porches of the churches. The Pope himself left the Vatican; he betook himself on January 6th to St. John Lateran, though merely with the purpose of informing himself directly of the gravity of the damages; he then went to live in the Quirinal.

Gradually everything returned to normal condition; those who had removed went back to their own houses, resumed their regular habits and forgot the perils they had undergone. The panegyrists continued some time longer to exalt Cardinal Aldobrandino; the hydraulic engineers to discuss the reasons for the inundations of the Tiber and the proper means to prevent them; then these too were silent,[1] and the water continued to flow beneath its bridges, ready to rise again at its pleasure and invade Rome in centuries to come as it had invaded it in centuries past.

The jesting mood also returned. "The real reason for the recent inundation," said Beni, addressing the pontiff, is this: "The noble Tiber (if it be permissible to mingle grave matters with gay) first paid a visit to Rome, then, seized with a longing to view so many fine new buildings never seen by him before, wandered through every quarter of your city. Next nothing would do him but approach the steps of the Vatican. Finally, vieing in devotion with the people of Rome, he made haste on that holy day of Christmas to present himself in some one of its halls, to receive the blessing of your Holiness and, were so great a happiness permitted him, to imprint a kiss upon your sacred feet." [2]

Let us now seek the characters of our story, blockaded by the flood.

Plautilla had arrived in Rome at the height of the festivities for Clement VIII's return. She was left by Olimpio with their son in Cinzia's house, "without bread, wine, or money"; she remained there for thirteen days, or until January 2, after suffering terror and hunger during the

[1] On June 26, 1599, an *avviso* to Urbino said: "Regarding the new bed which they wished to make for the river, it has finally been resolved to do no more in the matter, because in fact it would be money wasted, and also because they reckoned that more than 200,000 scudi would be required, and this city to-day is so situated that it could not lay hands on ten scudi if it did not impose some new municipal food-tax."

[2] Paolo Beni, *Discorsi sopra l'inondatione del Tevere* (Rome, 1599), pp. 3-4.

inundation. As soon as the Tiber subsided she went to the palace of Marzio Colonna to seek Olimpio; she did not find him there. She found only Fra' Pietro, Olimpio's brother. It was certainly he who conducted her to the house of a certain Cilla, on the Piazza delle Erbe (which the waters had barely touched), near the Trevi fountain. This Cilla was a half-sister of Olimpio and Fra' Pietro; she was born of a different mother. She had come to Rome fully eight years before, as the wife of a muleteer, Agostino de Amicis, of Castelvecchio (a part of the commune of Preci, in the county of Norcia). She outlived the events we are narrating only a short time. Plautilla and her little nephew were taken by her into her home.

Olimpio learned all this from his brother; being himself about to leave, he asked Giacomo Cenci to see to her, give her aid, and arrange that in her turn she too might quit Rome.

Giacomo went to see her on January 10, the day after Olimpio had left the city. He had already journeyed freely about Rome, paying not the least attention to the obligation he had assumed "to remain confined in his own house under forfeit of 50,000 scudi." Possibly he thought that the disaster which had occurred and the horrible condition of the city would keep the minds of the governors of Rome occupied, and that no one at such a moment would concern himself with the inquiry into the family affairs of the Cenci.

He found Plautilla; she herself tells of their meeting. "I talked with Signor Giacomo in this manner: a few days after the river had overrun Rome, when I was in the house of my relative Cilla, one day there came a knock at the door, and I said: 'Who is there?' And the answer came: 'Friends. Is Olimpio's wife within?' And I answered: 'Enter,' and some one said 'Good evening'; and I saw that it was Giacomo Cenci; and he said to me: 'What are you doing? Olimpio, your husband, has sent me here, and I promised him to come and see you.' Then I said: 'Where is Olimpio gone?' He said: 'I have sent him away; he is in a safe place and will soon return; so be of good

cheer, for meantime I shall not fail you, but will give you money and whatever you require; and I would like you to go away, to leave Rome for a fortnight or so.' And I said that I knew not whither to go, and he said that he would give me money and procure horses and speak to my relative Agostino. He bade me make up my mind to go, for it would only be a matter of a few days.' There was no more said that evening; and having spoken of it to Agostino, I waited with him all ready to depart; and in the morning this Signor Giacomo returned alone, and on my telling him that I had decided to depart, he said to me that I should go, and that later I could return to Rome and he would not abandon me. So Signor Giacomo said to me: 'Here are these ten scudi for you, and four for the carriage.' . . . I said to Signor Giacomo that before I went away I wished to see my daughter, Vittoria, who was in their house, and he answered me that he would very gladly send her to me with his sister, Beatrice; 'and do you tell Beatrice of anything you may need.' So I remained with him until at vesper-hour I went to the church of the Capuchins, where she was to come."

It was that church of the Capuchins which since 1631 has borne the title of Santa Croce de' Lucchesi; it rises on the west slope of the Quirinal, a few steps from the Piazza delle Erbe, where Plautilla was lodging.

The meeting was for her a moving experience. She embraced and kissed her daughter, weeping; she even displayed gratitude toward the woman who had destroyed her peace and ruined her household. "And I kissed the Signora Beatrice's hand, and Signora Beatrice, she too began to exhort me to go forth from Rome, and I was not sorry to go, because I should soon return, and so I promised to go." It was already evening; Beatrice, with Vittoria, returned to her home, in leaving which she had broken, as had Giacomo, the pledge to remain confined in it under forfeit of 50,000 scudi.

On January 15th Plautilla came to Anticoli Campagna in the Ernici mountains, above Fiuggi. It was a village formerly belonging to the Colonna. It is still surrounded

by ramparts, and its steep and narrow streets still retain a certain picturesqueness, thanks to a few old houses, which are, however, every day harder to find amid the swarm of new houses and villas. This village was chosen by Plautilla because two sisters of Olimpio lived there: Settimia, married to a certain Michele Borghese, and Antonia (born of a different mother), wife of no less a personage than a Messer Giovan Francesco Alessandri, who had been "chancellor" or "Marine Inspector," and who was addressed in letters as "molto magnifico!"

Plautilla was received by Antonia in the village of Anticoli; she then went to stay in the house of Borghese, outside the walls, merely, she said, to aid her kinswoman, Settimia, who was ill; but she seems to have remained there almost constantly until about May 13th, when she returned into Anticoli to the Alessandri house.

Of all this, however, we will speak again. We must now return to Olimpio, who, as Giacomo Cenci told Plautilla, had been sent "to a secure place!"

Olimpio's imprudence and effrontery, his assumption of mastery in the house of Cenci, and his shameless intimacy with Beatrice had grown to an intolerable pitch.

When Pomella was told that the authorities were looking for Olimpio, he burst out laughing. "Olimpio," he said, "was going about Rome all day, and would stand talking with certain constables of Cafalano, chief police officer of Rome, all day long; Captain Ovidio told me this; he spoke to us in a little booth of Captain Ovidio's which is set up on the Piazza of the Monte de' Cenci, and which is rented to that captain by Signor Giacomo and his brother." It may be added that Olimpio and Captain Ovidio had known each other "since old days."

On parting from Olimpio, Beatrice had imprudently gave him the ring with the cut diamond, formerly belonging to her father. He immediately put it on his finger and wore it; how dearly he prized it—quite beyond its intrinsic value, an event which will appear in due time will show. In addition, Beatrice had a velvet costume made for her lover, worth fifty scudi. She kept it in the

monastery of Montecitorio, waiting to give it him until such a present would no longer appear compromising, as in case she should be married.

By the first days of December Giacomo Cenci and Marzio Colonna had reached an understanding concerning Olimpio Calvetti. Colonna had eventually wearied of Calvetti's villainies, and was persuaded that the terrible man was a danger to every one. The intermediary was Camillo Rosati, Colonna's own confidential man, himself an unscrupulous character. Signor Marzio could not but feel disgust at the covert blackmail attempted by Olimpio in sending him word that serious facts about Beatrice's reputation would be divulged if hands were laid on him! We know how the proud Colonna replied to this message, which was couched in somewhat coarser phrase: secrecy would assuredly be preserved about any conduct of Beatrice, but Olimpio's case was a very different matter!

The first dialogue between Giacomo and Rosati had no result, for the latter went to Naples and did not return till after the floods of the Tiber were at an end. The pair then had a second meeting in the piazza Santi Apostoli; we already know that Giacomo made no scruple of leaving the house where the Court believed him a prisoner. Rosati thus reports the discussion that took place between them: "Signor Giacomo told me that he desired Olimpio be got away from this place by reason of some things which it was perceived he was doing with Signora Beatrice, his sister; and that it would do him a service to find a way of taking Olimpio away; and I said . . . that I had to go to Lombardy . . . concerning an honourable alliance between princely parties, with the knowledge of Signor Marzio; and that if Olimpio wished to come he might well come with me. Signor Giacomo told me that he would give me an answer."

It is certain that Giacomo with the support of Marzio Colonna, succeeded, by a gift of fifty scudi, in persuading Olimpio to absent himself from Rome, at least for some time, and to grasp the occasion of Rosati's journey to

Lombardy to have a travelling companion; for on January 9th (we can be sure of the date) [1] they departed together toward Florence. They left at the same time as the regular mail carrier and took with them Pacifico Bussone of Terni, Cesare's brother. He was still a mere lad, and served Giacomo as groom. We shall have to speak of him again.

When they arrived at Florence, Rosati, who wished to have his victim alone, dismissed Pacifico. "Begone, turn back; we have nothing more for you to do," he said. Olimpio, thinking no harm, interposed no objection; he entrusted to the boy his grey horse, on which he had ridden thus far, to be brought back to Rome. Then, taking a hired horse, he continued with Camillo toward "Lombardy"; the name at that time included Emilia. They took the road to Bologna; there they rested and left their horses, to set off again by carriage along the via Emilia.

Rosati tells that, between Modena and Reggio, his companion asked him if they were outside the Papal States. On being assured that they were, he drew a sigh of relief, and abandoned himself to confessions about the crime at La Petrella, "for he was a man very willing to talk." Yes, he had murdered Signor Francesco; but "at the instance of Signora Beatrice," with the full knowledge of Signora Lucrezia, and with the complicity of Catalano. He had not known how to say "No" to Beatrice! "Hearing this, I began to tell him that he had done well, it having been for love, as he told me; and I did this so as not to seem to disdain him, and that his suspicions might not be aroused." Olimpio then went into details and told how the "affair" had gone; every detail was to be reported later to the judge.

At Rubbiera they turned northward toward the Po; they "arrived at a cheerful new castle, whereinto they entered, and . . . Camillo spoke privately with the castel-

[1] It was a Saturday; therefore it could only have been January 9; for the preceding Saturday, January 2, Rosati was at Naples; and the following Saturday, January 16, Giacomo was already in prison; and we know that he did not leave the prison until the day he went to his death.

lan, and . . . as was learned later, Olimpio, standing aside, believed that Camillo had spoken with said castellan, and found him unwilling to receive them, for they departed thence." These are the words of Fra' Pietro Calvetti, reporting what he had learned from Olimpio's lips. It is easy to understand what really took place. Rosati, after convincing the keeper of his credentials as confidential servant and envoy of Colonna, revealed Olimpio's crime, in a low aside, and asked him to clap Olimpio in prison. The castellan did not welcome a guest of that character, with all the complications that must follow; he refused, thus constraining the couple to continue their journey. In fact, on the afternoon of the same day (January 16th) they arrived at Novellara.

This itinerary identifies the "cheerful new castle" where admittance was refused them as the fine palazzo of San Martino del Rio, constructed by the branch of the Este family which was invested by Ercole I with the fief of San Martino, and the fiefs of Castellarano and Campogalliano.

Rosati was received in very different fashion by the Countess of Novellara. This lady was Vittoria di Giantommaso di Capua, Marchese of La Torre di Francolise and widow of Count Alfonso di Novellara. She could not have been very old in 1599, for she died nearly thirty years later.[1] She attended providently to the welfare of her little state; it was in this very year that she established grain-storehouses and loan-offices.

What happened then is related with inevitable reservations by Rosati, and more frankly and explicitly by Fra' Pietro Calvetti and his nephew, Papirio; these two learned it directly from Olimpio two months after the incident.

Countess Vittoria received Marzio Colonna's secretary honourably, and a long secret colloquy took place, of which the subject was Olimpio and his crimes, especially the murder committed in La Petrella, a "state of Signor Marzio Colonna." Finally she invited Rosati to dine with her.

Olimpio meantime had sat down to meat alone. He

[1] May 23, 1627.

was served by a man with bared head; this gave him occasion to say: "I do not wish to dine if you do not cover yourself, for I am not accustomed to be served in such noble fashion!"

But he was not honoured merely in the manner of serving; his food had been poisoned. The servant had done his task so thoroughly as to make its flavor almost offensive. Everything was bitter: the soup, the meat, the salad; this last was spat out by the victim. And then he said: "Ahimé, what can this be?", thinking that he had come to lose his palate!

At this pass Camillo Rosati arrived. The Countess's meal was not ready; he came, therefore, to bear Olimpio company for a time and to drink with him. He took the bottle and poured out a long draught; but in passing it to Olimpio he let it slip from his hand so that it was broken and the wine lost. "No harm is done!" he said; "bring another bottle." The fresh bottle was brought, and Olimpio drank from the glass filled by the same courtly servant! "Immediately in his stomach and throughout his body such an agony seized him that it seemed dogs were eating him; he felt a dreadful sensation of burning and began to cough and to say 'I am a dead man!' And he left eating and began to make a great outcry and to lament loudly, so that all the servants of the house came running thither." Olimpio then turned to Rosati, calling him traitor, saying it was an infamous deed to pretend himself a friend in order to slay by treachery. The other at first swore it was not true that he had attempted to poison his friend; then "he began to say to the bystanders: 'He is drunk; he is drunk!' Then he went off to see the Signora; and Olimpio began to vomit out of his mouth; and he was taken to a room where he vomited both ways . . . and he felt himself grow faint and he doubted but he would die soon . . . and he began to say: 'For God's sake, for the love of God, call me a confessor, call me a confessor, for I am dying!' And seeing him in such an evil pass, those servants called the confessor, and there came to confess him a certain Father Antonio, a Jesuit,

Poggio Vittiano

who was confessor to the aforesaid Signora, and this was a great father who confessed and comforted him much; and when his confession was made and the father had gone, a little later he began to feel somewhat better, through the vomiting he had done."

Camillo, hearing that Olimpio was improving, realised his danger. He went to the Countess and said: "Signora, this is a terrible man; it would be well to throw him into prison; for I doubt that he may do some escapade and kill some one of us." Rosati was now thinking of his own skin. The Countess then "had Olimpio imprisoned [the words are Fra' Calvetti's] in a tower-cellar. To put him there she sent for certain old soldiers and *sbirri*, and she made them go and stand outside the room where Olimpio lay and where he had vomited; and some of them looked in at the door, saying to him: 'Come forth!' Olimpio stood up on his feet, and when he came forth into the hall, one of the soldiers brought an arquebus barrel down on his head, so that he was stunned and fell to earth. Then Olimpio thought that the soldiers wanted to kill him and cut off his head, having first seen the affair of the poison; so that he covered his face with the cloak he had on his back, so as not to see when they were willed to strike him and cut off his head. And as he lay thus on the floor, many of those soldiers sprang upon him, and they began to search him; I think the *sbirri* were upon him also. And in this search they made they took from him a diamond ring of a value of seventy scudi which Olimpio had on his finger; and then Camillo took this ring; for he was one of those who were on Olimpio's back, searching him; and maybe what they took off him could come to twenty scudi or a little more. Since he was in great fear of being slain he said to Camillo: 'Ah, Camillo, save my life, and I will give you a hundred scudi more.' And Camillo answered him: 'Where are they?' And Olimpio replied: 'They are buried in a certain place, and I alone know where I buried them.' But he said this in order not to be slain, and it was not true that he had this money. And then they put Olimpio in prison in the tower dungeon of that fortress,

and there they put irons on him, and they kept him manacled and in irons from St. Anthony's day (January 17) until nearly Lent."

It need hardly be said that in Rosati's testimony he failed to mention the poisoning; but in all the rest his narrative coincides fully with what Olimpio revealed to his brother, Fra' Pietro, and to his nephew, Papirio. Rosati in fact says that the Countess of Novellara "had Olimpio imprisoned, and he was incarcerated closely with stocks and irons while I was there (that was four or five days), and also for many days after." He admitted that he had taken from Olimpio the gold ring, which was broken in the struggle, and that he had found on the prisoner "thirty-three or thirty-four scudi of Papal money, which were divided in the following manner: twenty to the Secretary of the Countess, and the rest to the sbirri and the castellan. . . . And he said to me to save him, and he would give me two hundred scudi which he had hidden, but he did not tell me where, and he would give me . . . a tablecloth of damask napery such as is worth seventy scudi each, and he had two and would give me one."

The money of which Rosati thus spoke was indeed taken from Olimpio, but only, he said, to be distributed to the dependents of the Countess of Novellara; he also speaks of objects offered him as ransom, which he had not accepted. He had, then, neither taken nor kept anything for himself except the ring torn from Olimpio's hand, the very ring that Beatrice had given her lover. True, Rosati added that Olimpio meant to give it to him; but this was false: there was nothing that more inflamed Olimpio's spirit or drove him to such fury. About two months later, when he had escaped from Novellara and found his way to the cell of his brother, Pietro, in the Convento della Minerva, he enjoined Pietro to seek out Camillo Rosati and tell him that "if the ring were not returned, he would take it from Camillo's finger and slay him, though he should hide from him in his mother's womb!"

The appalled Fra' Pietro added: "I would not do this embassy, nor even would I have it done."

Olimpio, as we shall see, remained a prisoner in Novellara for about a month and a half. Our business is now with facts of extreme importance which had been occurring in the meantime.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAPTURE OF CATALANO

The capture of Catalano was a matter of the utmost importance for the resumption of the criminal proceedings.

"By means of his confession," it was declared, "the other accomplices were held and the confessions obtained, through which justice was later rendered." His capture was no very difficult task; it was well known to every one that he was living in Ascrea, and seldom went outside the neighbourhood, or at furthest to Poggio Vittiano, where dwelt his wife, mother, sister and "kindred." His taking meant little beyond some rough work for Messer Gaspare Giuzza, substitute to Girolamo Mazziotto, notary of the trial (he had been dispatched as Commissioner of the Cardinal Vicar), for the Chief Constable of the Court (Pirro Galeotto [1]), and for his soldiers and those of Tirone. The hazards of a search, pursuit, encounter, and struggle were lacking to the enterprise. Catalano's actions were remarkable for the same lack of foresight as those of Olimpio and all the Cenci.

As soon as Tirone had arrived at his conclusions, he informed the Court of Naples, and asked the co-operation of the Roman authorities before proceeding to the capture of Catalano. Giuzza, Galeotto, and Francesco Vico, sergeant-at-arms of the court, set out from Rome with sixteen men; [2] Tirone's band advanced from La Petrella,

[1] This man was tried for theft in 1593, when he was merely a *sbirro*.

[2] We find noted in the Libro della Depositaria Generale di Papa Clemente VIII, 1599, Feb. 3, "scudi 27.30, to ms. Gaspare [Giuzza] substitute of Mazziotto . . . for the like sum expended by him in the case of Giacomo Cenci and brothers . . . ; scudi to Illarione Sebastiani [this was a notary of the Camera] for various expenses made by him in the Cenci case"; also, 66.50 scudi given on February 11 to Captain Domenico, constable, for the men sent by him for the capture of Marzio.

moving toward Ascrea with some hardship on account of their night marches, the cold which had followed the season of sirocco, and the snow which had fallen on the mountains.

Porzia had at that precise time (January 6th or 7th [1]) returned to Poggio Vittiano from La Petrella, whither Tirone had summoned her, and whither she had gone with her husband's acquiescence. Marzio joined her on the 10th, a Sunday. He arrived in the evening; he must therefore have made the journey openly by day. They remained together in the house of his connection, Lelio Antonelli; they passed Monday there without incident. But meanwhile the agents from the Court of Rome, and Tirone's men, informed of the precise spot where he was to be found, were on their way; they arrived on Tuesday, the 12th, when dawn was just breaking.

Marzio was in bed with Lelio and the latter's brother, Giovan Angelo; Porzia was with Girolima, Marzio's sister. A singular reply was given by Antonelli a few days later when the judge asked him for an explanation of this manner of distributing the sleepers: "I have not had any intimacy with my wife these five years past, although I have had her in my house; as for Marzio, I know not why he did not sleep with his wife."

Some noise or hint of strangeness roused Marzio's suspicion; he peered out of the window and perceived that the house was surrounded. "I saw many folk around the house, and I feared that they were people that Carlo Tirone was sending against me to get me in his hands." He awakened his companions, who hastily brought a ladder; by this means he climbed through a window in the back wall on to the roofs. Lelio, in order to give a false clue, moved the ladder quickly to another position.

He then opened the door to the officials and to the Papal *sbirri,* who invaded the rooms, while the women

[1] Lelio Antonelli said of Porzia: "She returned again four or five or six days before the rest of us were taken; this second time that she returned to our house she said that she had been examined by Signor Carlo."

dressed with frantic haste, and Porzia donned her purple gown. Had the officials perceived Marzio upon the roof in the growing light? Did they conceive the idea, later, when they saw the ladder and the tell-tale window? Pirro Galeotto boasted: "We began to search through the house and we did not find Marzio there; then I noticed that there was a ladder, and Francesco de Vico took the ladder and leaned it against the wall where there was a hole which opened out over the roofs; and Francesco went up on the roofs and called me, saying: 'Pirro, there he is . . . right here!' I was on the ladder, and we made him come down and we brought him into the kitchen, where I put the manacles on him." But Francesco de Vico also boasted of having made the discovery. "Searching the house, I saw a ladder which was leaning against a wall, and looking round the house, I saw a hole; I took the ladder and leaned it against that hole, and climbed up on the roofs and I found that Marzio was on the roofs; I turned my arquebus at him, saying: 'Stop in the name of the Law!'; and he turned around, saying to me: 'Here I am, don't shoot me.' I called my companion, Pirro, who also came up, and we brought Marzio down by the ladder, and we took him into the kitchen, where the manacles were put on him."

At this moment Tirone's men arrived; they began to jest cruelly with the prisoner: "Oh, here you are? Poor fellow! poor fellow!" Perhaps from bravado Catalano let some rather compromising words escape him: "Yes, here I am! If I have made a mistake, can I do else than die? One must die some time!" Other admissions escaped him, not quite in accordance with the truth and full of reticences, but inopportune in any case. Nevertheless he must have felt relief at merely speaking of the business. What a life his had been for the past four months! How many hours of terror! And to be forced to sing and dance and play with the lads of Ascrea for his living!

Yes, he had been present at the crime, but the one who had "given it" to Francesco Cenci was Olimpio—not himself—no! no! He had received twenty scudi, with

which he had purchased some grain "and other things"; and "they" (he did not say who) had given him that cloak, that singular cloak of mixed cloth, with arm-holes, which they had put on him despite his manacles, that cloak of his murdered victim which will burden his shoulders until the day of his death.

With Marzio were arrested his kinsman, Lelio, his wife, Porzia, and also Giovan Angelo, "shepherd and cowherd in the country"; but they did not take his sister, Girolima, nor his mother, Cristina.

"Tirone's men" re-entered La Petrella on the afternoon of the same day, January 12th, with the news of Marzio's capture; they told the crowd that gathered about them that he had confessed to receiving twenty ducats and the cloak. As the tale passed from mouth to mouth, it was amplified and took its place with the conjectures made in La Petrella during many months, and with the discoveries of Querco and Tirone. We have this information from Don Francesco Scossa and Don Salvati.

The wretched prisoners were driven forward afoot over the rough and snowy mountain paths to Rome. When they passed through any village, crowds would gather on the roads, curious above all to see Marzio, everywhere proclaimed as one of the assassins of Cenci. This occurred at Vallecúpola, Stipes, Posticciola and other villages along the familiar route. On the 13th they were in Rome; Marzio and Lelio were imprisoned in Tordinona; Porzia and Giovan Angelo in a house of detention, pending their examination.

On the morning of the following day (Thursday, January 14th) Marzio di Floriano Catalano submitted to his first examination in the Tordinona prison.[1] Commissioner Gaspare Giuzza, with whom we are already acquainted, was present, in addition to the notary, Giro-

[1] Some have given January 15 as the date of this examination, but the text of the trial-record states explicitly: *Die decima quarta.* Besides, to settle the date as the 14th, one need only reflect that the arrest of Giacomo and Bernardo, which undoubtedly took place on the afternoon of the 14th, was decided upon after Marzio had given his testimony.

lamo Mazziotto, and the judge, the "Most Illustrious and Excellent Signor Ulisse Moscato, Doctor in both laws, and Prosecutor in criminal cases, for the Most Reverend Signor Vicar of Rome."

Marzio spoke of himself and of his trade as kettle-maker, adding: "I do a little of everything." He related the circumstances of his capture, said that he had been at Ascrea teaching the youths dancing and the playing of the guitar and lute, and continued with some show of emotion: "I have a wife and small children, two girls and a boy"; the last was five years old and the girls were three and one. "I am a very poor man."

He stated that he had been in prison for two or three days, on the complaint of Francesco Cenci, for having brought Beatrice's letters to Rome. He spoke of the horse he had bought from Cenci and which he had not entirely paid for, whence his giving of Porzia's purple gown for security.

He confessed his great terror of Tirone, who was raising the country against him on the ground that he had been the accomplice of Olimpio Calvetti in the murder of Signor Francesco. He said that at Olimpio's order he had gone to speak to Beatrice, and that she had told him she wished to send him to Rome, but that it was needful to await Olimpio, who had meanwhile gone to Aquila; that Olimpio had then journeyed to Rome, and on his return had shown to the witness a red root and had said that he possessed some opium, both the articles having been given him by Giacomo Cenci for the murder of his father; Giacomo was to give Olimpio "bread for his whole life" as a reward, and was to provide for the marriage of Olimpio's daughter, Vittoria. Olimpio, the witness continued, had sought his participation in the crime, but the witness had attempted to dissuade him vainly: since eight or ten days later Signor Francesco was found dead in the court, and the guilt was laid at Olimpio's door on account of some bloody wool found in the house of the apothecary Massimo, Plautilla's uncle. Now if Olimpio had come to call the witness in the early hours of September 9, as had

been said, it was to give him the news that Signor Francesco was dead and to pray him to mount his horse speedily and hie to Rome to tell the news to the Cenci brothers. But Scocchino had gone in his place, and he himself would not even go up to the castle to speak to "the Cenci ladies" for fear some suspicion that he had done the murder might be settled on him. It behooved him also to use caution, for already Beatrice, desperate at her wretched life in Petrella castle, had made suggestions of flight to him. By good fortune he had held such a proposal to be folly, and she had turned to others, and had "begun to treat with Olimpio, who was much criticised because they were doing things together!"

Moscato cross-examined the witness, who confessed that he had received from Beatrice twenty scudi, the cloak of dark mixture on his back, and the restoration of Porzia's gown. He did not think that Signor Francesco had died of poison, for he was on his guard against all his kin. Witness confirmed the statement that he had carried letters and messages to Rome from the ladies.

Catalano, whose system was apparently to alternate falsity with fact, in the hope that the true would give credence to the false, finished his examination by stating that after Signor Francesco's death he had accompanied the members of the Cenci family as far as Nerola on their return to Rome.

It would be vain to dwell on the petty details of this interrogatory, as upon others to follow, referring to matters without bearing on the events that have occurred and without importance in the trial itself. It is also needless to call attention to each lie, inaccuracy, and suppression of fact, which the reader is in a position to perceive for himself, being fully informed of the manner in which the facts actually took place.

After Catalano's deposition the Court ordered the arrest of Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci for the same day.

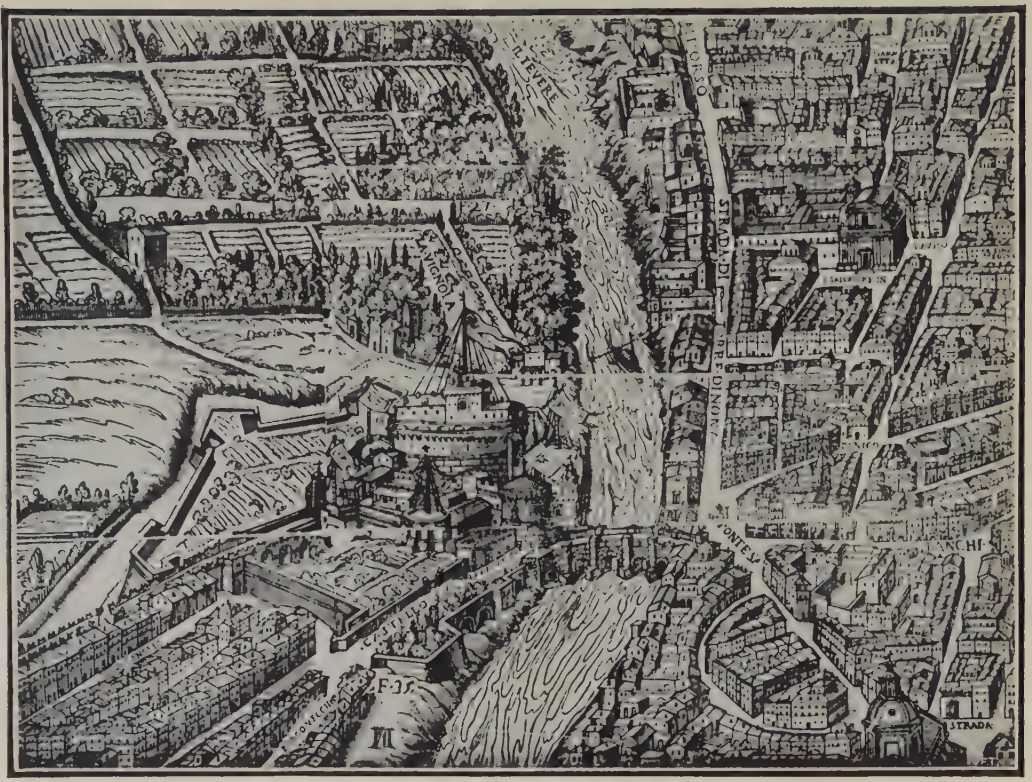
At the twenty-second hour (3.30 P. M.) the Chief Constable of the city and his *sbirri* appeared at the palace of

the Monte de' Cenci. They found the two brothers and arrested them in the presence of Beatrice, Lucrezia (who had shortly before been authorised to return from the Velli establishment to that of the Cenci) and Lodovica. To the last named Giacomo gave orders that, even if Monsignor Guerra should send for carriages, horses and "the whole house," she should obey "the least man of his men who should come in his name." After this, Giacomo and his brother accompanied the *sbirri* to the Tordinona prisons, which were on the left bank of the Tiber between the river and the street which still bears the name of Tordinona, at a considerable distance from the Cenci palace.

Here the Orsini had built, apparently in the thirteenth century, a tower with living-quarters; it was guarded by a postern-gate called "della Pila," [1] the tower was known as Tordinona, by a corruption of Torre dell' Annona,[2] having possibly been used as headquarters by collectors of tolls upon the grain and other supplies that the boats discharged at the near-by postern-gate. As early as the fourteenth century, the tower had served as a prison. In 1408 it was usually called "the Pope's prison." The prison was extended to include the buildings contiguous to the tower, which were gradually enlarged and unified so as to form a vast square palazzo with a central court. At first this prison, used for those confined for minor offences, was directed by a functionary of the Apostolic Camera called by a Turkish title, "the Soldan." He had under his command a Lieutenant, who took his place in case of absence, a Captain of the police administration, and a notary. Later, to avert many inconveniences which need not be detailed here, the Camera ceded it to the Company of Charity, which in its turn rented it to a Captain who pledged himself to assume entire charge of the supplies and management of the prison, that is, of the care of prisoners, their safe keeping, cleaning, food, furniture, laundry, repairs, etc.

We possess accurate descriptions of this prison; but,

[1] Pila = Pier or buttress.
[2] Annona: food-supplies for a city.—*Trans.*



Tordinona and Castle of St. Angelo, 1610

to limit ourselves to what concerns our story, need merely say that it was divided into two main parts: the public and secret sections. "To the public section were brought prisoners just released from the secret section or those whose pending cases were of little moment. These were said to be 'at liberty.' The secret quarters were chiefly for the custody of those who were to be examined for some grave offence." [1]

There were other subdivisions in the public prisons, according to the social classes of the inmates: poor, "not poor," and well-to-do. These last could circulate about the building with a certain degree of liberty, lean out over the street, receive visits; the poor, below, could stand at the windows behind gratings (we have already seen Sergetto in this posture), beg for alms, talk with passers-by, and even make vociferous demonstrations. On July 4, 1609, they assembled behind their bars while Paul V was passing and began to shout: "Hurrah for the Pope! Hurrah for the Pope!"; then: "Free us, Holy Father, free us!"; "whereat the visage of His Holiness was beclouded, he thinking that thereby they wished to call down death upon him, since when the papal throne was vacant the prisoners were released." [2]

When Giacomo and Bernardo arrived at Tordinona, they were placed in separate cells in the "secret" wing. Neither the two brothers nor Beatrice nor Lucrezia, it must be remembered, disturbed though they were, had even the most distant thought of the tragic end which awaited them. Francesco Cenci, Giacomo, Rocco, and Cristoforo had been accused and imprisoned, often for the most serious crimes, and had always been able to extricate themselves by virtue of influence in high places or by the payment of fines. Some words of Paruta expressed the common feeling: "As for the harshness of the trials, very severe though justice is, it is quite clear that its authority

[1] This quotation is taken by Pasquale Adinolfi: *Il Canale di Ponte e le sue circostanti parti* (Narni, 1860), p. 12, from G. B. Scanaroli, *De Visitatione Carceratorum libri tres* (Rome, 1675), p. 17.

[2] Orbaan: *Documenti sul Barocco,* p. 144.

has ill-proportioned results with respect to the rank of those subject to it, and especially as regards noble persons and Roman signors and barons, who customarily enjoy many exemptions, and are respected and governed with a milder rule." [1]

Mario Guerra, moreover, was ever at the ear of Cardinal Montalto, who, as we know, possessed great influence in the Papal Court. Even though it should be necessary to pay great sums to obtain peace and immunity, the money would be paid. Lucrezia was the most terrified of the family at the arrest of her two stepsons; yet she thought only of the possibility of being "taken" in her turn and condemned to imprisonment. She kept expressing her fears in this regard to Beatrice, who encouraged her to deny—to deny forever, despite torture. "Have you not fortitude enough to bear the rack a little?" said Beatrice to her once. "I can bear it."

After the arrest of Giacomo and Bernardo the Cenci palace, where the two women remained, was put under guard by the *sbirri*. Beatrice, in her second examination (on the following day, January 15), affecting surprise, declared that she did not know why she was "held in the house by a guard of *sbirri*."

She held to all she had said in her first interrogatory. Her father had fallen from the balcony "when the sun had risen," and while she was "beyond her own apartments . . . four rooms away"—in the gallery, to be exact. She had seen the body in the wilderness, but she could not say whether it was lying prone or in a huddled position. "I did not look closely enough for that; the very moment I had leaned out and seen my father lying below, I turned back and went to call the servant." It is needless to report here other details which Beatrice repeats to satiety in the records of the trial and which the reader already knows. We shall record the most expressive phrases, the ones that best serve to illumine her spirit and character. She spoke cautiously of Olimpio. "He is tall of stature,"

[1] Op. cit., II, p. 522.

she said, "and wears a black beard and is rather fat than lean. . . . I know not for what reason . . . he was ousted from the castle . . . ; letters came from Signor Marzio bidding him begone." Here she added that her father made haste to inform her that Olimpio had been dislodged from the castle! Naturally she concealed the fact that Olimpio had continued his visits to the stronghold; she told the truth concerning her own return to Rome after her father's death; here there was nothing of importance that need be hidden. In fact she now began to carry into effect her plan of defence, striving to prove that she had never received any wrongs or blows at her father's hands which would give her any motive for vengeance, and that she had not even made any resistance to his will while she was confined in the castle of La Petrella. We shall see how late in her trial this position was abandoned and a completely different one, indeed the exact reverse, substituted.

Beatrice denied therefore that she had permitted herself any complaints against her father in her letters to her brothers; and adhered to her story despite the persistent questioning of Moscato. It was true that her father's body had not been brought into the rooms of the castle, but had been taken from the wilderness to the church; it was true that she had not gone to see it; but she had given for the funeral ceremonies whatever the arch-priest had asked, and various other objects, "that is, old cloaks, which were no longer good, and worn-out stockings . . . to the poor, for the love of God."

She furnished certain topographical details, and some facts about the servants; then she passed to the mortal wound which appeared on her father's body. "According to what the arch-priest of La Petrella told me, it was an elder-spine, which they call a 'sterpone' in that village . . . it had entered one eye and temple and had pierced inside." She added that the arch-priest had told her that "he had pulled out the thorn and that it had left a hole, and he had put his finger into it; and he said too that the head had struck on a stone which was there."

The arch-priest was to deny this statement; meanwhile Beatrice went on to say that on the morning when her father had fallen from the balcony, the two gates of the castle had been opened in her presence.

The judge then proceeded to examine Lucrezia, also in the Cenci palace, and in the same room where Paolo had died, little more than a month before. Naturally she too recounted the fall from the balcony, but she once more varied its details. "I was going about the house, to and fro, as one does, and as I was going toward the door which opens on the balcony, I saw that the balcony was all broken, and as soon as I looked over I saw my husband there lying below on the ground. . . ."

Lucrezia, like Beatrice, went at length into many details of the life they had led at La Petrella, upon the servants and the quarters there; but she did not pursue her stepdaughter's tactics; rather she sought to prove the barbarity of their treatment by Signor Francesco. She was not content with telling of their imprisonment, but coloured her tale with all manner of false accessories; for instance that, in addition to their receiving their food through a wicket in the hall door, "it would be let down in a little basket, by a rope, through some holes in the windows, which were nailed up!"

She then stated, and repeated in spite of Moscato's insistence, that Signor Francesco had never been angered at Olimpio Calvetti, but had ousted the castellan from the fortress because he wished Beatrice and Lucrezia to remain alone when he himself came to Rome.

Lucrezia's defence diverged, then, from Beatrice's from the very beginning, both with respect to her complaints about their imprisonment at La Petrella and with respect to the measures they had taken to escape from it.

Some questions were put to her also concerning Olimpio, but she would only answer that she had not seen him since she had found him in Paolo's room "before the boy died . . . and he was right where we are now during this examination." She said also that Olimpio had accompanied the Cenci on their return from La Petrella "a

little way along . . . then he took a road which goes to Zagarolo."

The judge's cross-examination, brief and quiet in manner, perhaps gave the two women hope that matters would not go ill; if so, such hopes were illusory.

Cesare Cenci was almost certain, after the imprisonment of Giacomo and Bernardo, that similar measures would sooner or later be taken in the case of Lucrezia and Beatrice. To forestall them he made advances to the Prosecutor Moscato on January 16th. The latter said "that he would require a bond of 50,000 scudi for each one." He added that Lodovica Velli should also be bailed, but that in her case he would be content with considerably less. Meanwhile the vigilance of the *sbirri* increased; a band of them was installed in the Cenci palace.

Orazio Pomella relates that at the Ave Maria of the following day (a Sunday) he went to the palace to speak to the three women in question, and found it "full of *sbirri*. These said to me: 'What do you want here, you?' I answered them: 'I have come to speak to the ladies; may one not speak to them?' They answered: No." In the meantime Onofrio and Bernardino Velli came out. These were the father and the brother of Lodovica, Giacomo's wife. "I wished to ask the ladies if anything was to be done as regards the boys or other matters. . . . The *sbirri* said that they had taken a man outside of Rome and brought him to the city on account of the death of Signor Francesco . . . for this reason I went up close to the fire and said to them: 'Are you kept here still? What is the meaning of it all, and what is being said?' And they replied: 'We are here in the case of Signor Francesco.' "

It should be noted here that Beatrice kept Vittoria, Olimpio's daughter, constantly at her side, and no one thought of removing the child.

The 16th of January was a busy day for the Court.

First Sante, son of Giovanni, deceased, of La Petrella, was examined, in Moscato's own house. Sante had been

present at the time Francesco Cenci's body was exhumed as ordered by Tirone. He described the wounds, and added that every one in La Petrella laid the crime on Olimpio and Marzio.

Then followed Bernardo's first examination, at Tordinona, in the presence of Moscato and "the Most Illustrious and Excellent Signor Pompeo Molella, General Civil Procurator of His Holiness the Pope and of the Reverend Apostolic Chamber."

Bernardo said he did not know the reason for his arrest. Moscato cut him short by questioning him on his father's death. "I heard from every one up there in La Petrella that my father fell from the castle balcony. . . . I heard it from the chief people of the place: from one called Durante de Dionisio," and from the two priests, Don Francesco and Don Marzio, and from others. This was when he had gone with his brother, Giacomo, and with Cesare Cenci "to get their sister, Beatrice, and their stepmother, Lucrezia."

He told how, when, where, and from whom he and his brothers had received the news of their father's death. Giacomo "had shewn that he felt grief at the death."

At La Petrella he had seen the wilderness and the elder tree, but not the place where his father was buried. "I did not want to go there and see it." The two ladies had told nothing of the story, "and had only wept." They had found no money in the castle. At the present moment "Signor Giacomo and I are together . . . and we live as one family in common, and we have not separated." He mentioned family finances, and spoke of "the property to be restored by Mario Fano, Vipereschi, and Luzio Savelli" through the restitution of Antonina's dowry.

On their return to Rome, he said, a handful of peasants had followed them for as much as a mile from La Petrella; but only Olimpio and Vittoria had continued the journey with them, aside from the servants and muleteers. Vittoria "must be about eight or nine years old, and she came to stay in our house, and she is still there now."

Marzio, he said, had not come with them; but Olimpio

had often been in the palace, especially when he was assisting Paolo. "He would eat at table with me, with my brothers, Giacomo and Paolo while Paolo was well, and with my sister, Beatrice, and Giacomo's wife, named Lodovica, and we would all eat at one table together."

He then went on to describe his journey to La Petrella when his father had summoned him there, his first acquaintance with Olimpio, and his flight. He had never known that his father "bore any ill-will toward Olimpio, nor yet that Olimpio bore any toward his father."

Giacomo's second examination followed, also at Tordinona. "I have been a prisoner on other occasions . . . he admitted, I have been twice imprisoned by the Tribunal of the Governor, and once in the time of Valerio Pinzo, formerly judge of the Vicar; the first time I was there was on the accusation of Pinzo; it was an affair about women; some sort of criminal connection was alleged, I know not what; at that time I had no wife. And I was taken before the Governor for dicing, and another time I came before the same Governor on account of a complaint made at the instance of Signor Francesco, my deceased father, who brought it against all his sons, and not alone against me, and its substance was that we had had him imprisoned, and that we aimed at his life; and this under the governorship of Rucellai; and I surrendered myself voluntarily. I was a prisoner in this case for about two months; I do not know if my father had any share in the indictment against me; I know well that it was necessary to cite him when sentence was given." He asserted that neither he nor his brothers had instigated, publicly or secretly, the incarcerations of their father; he spoke, however, of the suits he and his brothers had brought against their father for maintenance. The judge's questions, in the first part of this examination, all tend toward the establishment of the bitterness in the relations between Giacomo and his father. Giacomo caught the judge's intention, and went so far as to say that he had never known that his father had disinherited him in his will, assigning to him only the absolute minimum that the severe

statutes required. At this point Moscato guessed Giacomo's drift and changed the subject, leading the witness to speak of his journey to La Petrella. He inquired into the witness's indifference to seeing his father's tomb and in ordering fitting obsequies; Giacomo answered that, once his father was buried, he had thought no more about him and that "he did not even remember what church they had said it was!"

He also affirmed that he had never received letters nor messages in which Beatrice made complaints of her father's treatment. She wrote merely to ask news of Giacomo and the family and to say "that she desired that an effort should be made to make some provision in her regard, either of a husband or a nunnery, and like words."

He described his own return to Rome from La Petrella, together with Lucrezia and Beatrice and others, "among whom, for long stretches of the journey," were Olimpio and Marzio. He did not deny that they had afterwards come to his palace. Olimpio even "had remained there to eat and sleep many times," and he kept a daughter there, "who, *I think* is named Vittoria." The judge returned to this subject, but with an air of not attaching much importance to it; thus Giacomo was led to talk freely: "Olimpio was wont to eat in my house, at my table; and he and I and my brothers, Bernardo and Paolo, were wont to eat at that table; and in the beginning the ladies also would eat there, that is my wife, Lodovica, and my sister, Beatrice." Then Olimpio had left, during Paolo's illness; he had received nothing from Giacomo, neither money, clothes, nor horses. The witness did not deny having made his acquaintance in Rome when he had come to see Bernardo and Paolo, who had fled from La Petrella, before Signor Francesco's death. It was true that they had spoken together, but of unimportant matters. The examination concluded with a reference to the prisoner's "privilege as family head."

Finally Francesco de Vico and Pirro Galeotto, both of Santa Vittoria, were brought to the stand. The first was

a sheriff, the second a court constable. They were examined upon their arrest of Marzio Catalano in Poggio Vittiano, a subject with which we are already familiar.

On January 17th, still in the Tordinona prisons, Lelio Antonelli, the ploughman who lived in concubinage with Marzio's sister, Girolama, in Poggio Vittiano, was brought before Moscato. It will be recalled that he had been taken into custody five days before, together with Marzio, his own brother, Giovan Angelo, and Porzia.

Lelio recounted all the journeys that Marzio, as a fugitive, and Porzia, under the shelter of her relatives, had made among their mountains between La Petrella, Poggio and Ascrea. He spoke of the emissaries of Carlo Tirone and of the parleys conducted in his name; of Catalano's distrust; and of Porzia's journey to La Petrella to be examined by Tirone. He did not conceal the fact that it was said throughout the Cicolano that Francesco Cenci had been murdered by Marzio and Olimpio Calvetti, and that Tirone had even discovered the hatchet with which he had been slain. Among the many who had told him these stories he recalled Orazio Calvi, Porzia's uncle, who, as we know, had gone to speak with Catalano at Tirone's behest. According to the common report, he said, the imprisonment of the ladies and their evil treatment by Signor Francesco were the chief causes of the crime. He knew also that Olimpio had been sent away from the castle.

Moscato wished to bring out the reason for Olimpio's dismissal; and to know just how much of the truth Marzio had revealed in his glib testimony. It was impossible, he insisted, that the witness did not know more than he was telling! It was vain for him to hide the truth; he would do well to tell it if he would not taste the efficacy of torture!

Lelio replied: "Signore, now before the rack has touched me I can tell you as much as when I shall hang on that rope, nor can I tell you more than what I have said."

None the less was he brought *ad locum torturae*,

stripped and bound to the rack. Still he insisted: "I can not tell you other than what I have said, for I know naught else."

The judge gave the gaolers the order to haul on the rope, and Lelio was racked. His body quivered and his bones cracked; he began to groan, to shout, to cry out: "Oh, God, oh, Christ, aid me! I know naught else than what I have said, did I know aught else I would assuredly say it; I know naught else than what I have said. Oh, spare me, unfortunate wretch that I am! I know naught else than what I have said, and if I knew aught else I would say it."[1]

Those present were dumb; only Moscato was seen to be muttering a prayer. It was the Credo; by repeating it he was measuring the time that Lelio's limbs were to be racked. Mechanically as the ticking of a clock, as the sand of an hour-glass, the mutter went on. The sufferer continued to utter cries of pain, to protest that he had told the truth; but the Credo must be said to the end.

At last Lelio was lowered, and the ropes cast off. His arms, which had been dislocated, were set in place.

No law was in existence defining for judges the cases wherein it was permissible to apply torture to the accused, and even to witnesses, as an aid in obtaining information; nor did any law regulate the character, harshness, and duration of the torture. In the Middle Ages the Podestà had had the right to devise new torments of an increasingly horrible nature and to invent punishments according to the greater or less perversity of his imagination. At the time of our story, the methods of torture had become fixed, but their application was left entirely to the judgment of the examiners. The only requirement in force in Rome was that the judges should not begin by torture, but should attempt first to learn the truth by every method of logical inquiry possible; if they then considered that the person under examination

[1] The words said under torture, and indeed all those reproduced between quotation marks, are textually transcribed from the trial records.

was not telling the truth, or the whole truth, they might proceed to torture, on condition, however, that "the state of his health should admit of it."

In this case, as we see, the judge began to rack a luckless individual who not only was not implicated in the crime, but who assuredly had little information about it. In any case he bore the torture without telling anything more; very likely he was unable to add to what he had already testified.

He was again being clothed when Marzio was brought in. The prisoner was wobegone and unkempt; he still wore Francesco Cenci's cloak. He gave as yet no symptom of treading the path of confession. He said that he had left La Petrella and gone to Poggio Vittiano and Peraglia the Sunday before the death of Cenci (September 6); although he had returned on the evening of the 8th, he had remained at home with his wife and children. If later he had gone to Ascrea it was because he was afraid of Tirone. He then spoke of Tirone's emissaries, especially of Orazio Calvi, and of the safe-conduct and "escort" that had been offered him.

It was true that on the morning of September 9, Olimpio Calvetti had come to the witness's house in La Petrella and had called him; but the death of Signor Francesco had already taken place. The witness described his wanderings among the mountains on that day, not as any flight, but as a search for a muleteer for the transport of lentils. He had indeed returned to his home that evening, and had slept with his wife.

"I went to the castle, also," he said, "for my wife's gown; and it was then I got the twenty scudi I told of; and I got this cloak on Saturday when Signor Giacomo Cenci came; and it was Signora Beatrice gave me everything." He had then gone to Rome; in the Cenci palace he had found Olimpio, to whom he had expressed astonishment that he could "go freely about Rome, because he had killed a constable in the country." While in the Cenci palace he had not eaten, nor drunk, nor received money, nor goods. He had remained in Rome two days and had returned to

wander about the mountains, between the Turano and the Salto, because Querco was at La Petrella. But on Querco's departure, he had re-entered La Petrella; there he had seen Olimpio near the church of Santa Maria, on Santa Lucia's Day (December 13, 1598). Olimpio had counselled him to be on the watch for Tirone, and whatever happened, not to reveal that Olimpio had shown him the drugs with which he wished to "poison and kill Signor Francesco." The conversation had indeed been brief!

Moscato did not believe that the conversation between the pair had been as short as the witness asserted; he wanted to know why Marzio, being innocent, had been so frightened of Tirone. Marzio replied: "The truth is that Olimpio warned me so that, should I be examined, I would not confess that he had conferred with me about wishing to poison Francesco Cenci . . . and that the guilt should not be laid to him of this homicide committed on the person of Signor Francesco." He added that Olimpio had told him the tale of the fall from the balcony, but that as for him, he had heard Olimpio speak of his wish to poison Cenci, he had seen the poison; and he could not avoid the suspicion that Olimpio himself had done the deed! Besides, the whole village accused Olimpio, and it was also known that his wife, Plautilla, had brought to the house of her uncle, the apothecary, the blood-stained wool out of the mattresses.

His examination terminated with these shameless lies, in the presence of Lelio, who must have pondered disconsolately on the fact that he, an innocent man, had been tortured while Marzio had escaped scot-free. But the limbs of the unhappy Marzio were destined to suffer far more grievous punishment!

Moscato's day finished with a brief interrogation of Giovan Angelo Antonelli, Lelio's brother. As we know, he was a poor shepherd and cattle-herd; he related merely that Porzia confessed on her arrival at Poggio Vittiano that she "had been in flight" because her husband was accused, with Olimpio Calvetti, of having killed "a Roman gentleman who was in Petrella castle."

The 17th of January, when these three examinations of Marzio Catalano and of the two Antonelli took place, was a Sunday. The trial was proceeding with most unusual speed, such indeed as to reveal a resolute and powerful will behind it. This was the will of Clement VIII. Paruta wrote: "The supervision and authority over criminal cases resides in the Governor of Rome; he is wont ordinarily to expedite these matters of himself. But the present Pontiff desires to be kept informed about these matters also, when they are cases of gravity; it is assuredly the marvel of all how he can apply his mind and thought to these petty things, wherein there is no consideration of state policy." [1]

On the morning of the 18th Michele Annunziato was examined. This is our old acquaintance, the French lackey called Paino. He told of the journeys between Rome and La Petrella made by himself and by the other servant, Girolamo, shortly before and after Signor Francesco's death. Some of the trips had been made separately, some together, and one with all the Cenci, returning from their castle to the palace at Rome.

Paino then discussed the other servants and described the balcony, saying that one could walk along it quite easily; thus proving that it was not a mere window-balcony, but a gallery along a good part of the wall.

The same day was marked by an important event—Cesare Cenci's arrest and his subjection to a very long examination. He was arrested in a room of the Cenci palace; his kinsman, Onofrio Velli, Lodovica's father, was also present, but was not molested. Cesare was taken to the prisons of the Corte Savella.

The Corte Savella, "annexed to the Marshalship of the Savelli," stood in the via Monserrato, opposite the church of Santa Maria di Monserrato. Its site is to-day

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, p. 519. Dolfin also wrote in 1598: "Criminal matters in Rome are committed to the charge of a governor, who takes precedence over all, after the cardinals, and he always journeys with the Pope, although he never settles those outstanding matters which occur very often, without the order of His Holiness or the Cardinal Aldobrandino." *L'Italia nel secolo decimosesto,* cit., IV, p. 461.

the southwest side of the Collegio Inglese, on the side of the via Montoro.[1] It was later abandoned and shortly after the middle of the seventeenth century, when the architect, Antonio del Grande, had finished the New Prison on the via Giulia, it was transformed in order to enlarge the Collegio Inglese. This commission was given del Grande in 1652 by Innocent X, who declared "the cells of Corte Savella" unserviceable, "on account of their inadequacy to the number of the prisoners and to their needs and to the functions which must be performed there, and also because through their antiquity they have been reduced to a very bad condition and are insecure." In fact they dated back to the fifteenth century.

Cesare Cenci was examined immediately after his arrival at the Corte Savella. He admitted knowing that the Court had arrested the Cenci on the supposition that Francesco had met his death by violence. Moscato promptly asked him from whom he had heard this; Cesare remained long in thought (*multum cogitabundus*, says the trial record) before replying: "From the guards who are in the house of those gentlemen." The witness had taken steps that the ladies should not be incarcerated; at this he turned to Moscato and said: "We have gone to-day to the notary in the case to give the bond, and he said that he awaited Your Worship's order."

He explained his relationship with Lodovica, Giacomo Cenci's wife, who "has two daughters and four sons, and now is again with child." [2]

He spoke of the first news of Signor Francesco's death, which had come to Rome in a letter which Beatrice had merely signed; of the doubts he had expressed as to its

[1] The old bird's-eye views of Rome determine the site of the Corte Savella better than any documents.

[2] The two daughters were Ersilia, baptised on February 18, 1592, and Virginia, born March 6, 1593; these two entered nunneries. The four sons were Francesco, baptised March 20, 1594; he became a Benedictine; Giovan Battista, born January 29, 1596; he married Pentesilea Caetani on December 3, 1620, and died in 1626; Felice, born May 14, 1597, died in 1641; and Cristoforo, born July 2, 1598, died in 1641. The son of whom Lodovica was then pregnant was born on June 10, 1599; he was named Angelo, and died in 1601.

Corte Savella About 1610

authenticity; and of his journey to La Petrella with the Cenci brothers. "The ladies, whom Signor Giacomo embraced . . . began to weep and grieve over the matter that had chanced; and I also condoled with them, saying that they should have patience about the matter."

He went at length into a description of the broken balcony, of Olimpio's presence in the castle, of the return to Rome, and of other details which the reader knows. It will be sufficient to give his most significant phrases, and those uttered with a defensive motive. Cesare said that before his arrival at La Petrella he had never seen Olimpio, and he believed that Giacomo had not known him either, for the witness had asked Giacomo who the man was, and he had received the reply: "I do not know. I think it is the castellan." It was Bernardo who had confirmed the statement: "That is the castellan!"

He had often gone bond for Giacomo for several thousand scudi. He had given one bond of a thousand scudi in conjunction with Clemente Vitelli. He had given these pledges after having married his niece to Giacomo; they had been in part discharged.

He told of the suits between father and sons for maintenance, and concerning the trust-restrictions which Francesco wished to disregard so as to be able to sell some of his property freely. He had been a harsh parent to his sons. He had not accepted any one's advice to put them to school; he had given them a life of utmost hardship; he had made no provision for them except when forced by the courts; and he had often repeated that he wished to disinherit them.

Witness did not conceal the fact that he had seen Olimpio, after Francesco's death, in the Colonna palace at the Santi Apostoli and in the house of the Cenci brothers, but he did not know at which of these he passed the night. He had eaten with Olimpio only once, one morning when he had found Olimpio at lunch; "and I too drank with him. . . . I have heard talk of the arrest of persons about La Petrella, who have been brought to Rome to the Tordinona. I know not if Olimpio be taken."

Moscato wished to learn of any confidences he had received concerning the crime; he questioned the witness threateningly on this point; but Cesare declared he had never received any from any one. He had indeed spoken to Giacomo of the tales that were going about and of the investigations Tirone had made at La Petrella. When Francesco's body had been stripped and inspected by the Captain of the region, "in all truth nothing was found upon him, and he had no wound on his body, saving that an elder-spike had entered into his head."

Moscato wished to know also Cesare's opinion about the callousness displayed by the sons in neglecting the ordinary obsequies fitting to the rank of the deceased, and in disdaining even to go and see the tomb which had been sealed scarcely three days before. Cesare appeared embarrassed. He recalled that in Rome the Cenci "had dressed in mourning." For the rest, he knew not what to say. The judge pressed him here. Why should a noble family like the Cenci admit to their roof and board an individual of Olimpio's extraction? Why did Beatrice take such care of Vittoria?

Cesare did not know; he did not believe that Giacomo kept Olimpio "at his own table"; as for Vittoria, he thought that Beatrice had conceived an affection for the girl.

On January 19th, still at Tordinona, Moscato first made a brief examination of Marzio. The man confirmed all that he had said in his previous examinations. "I don't want to suffer for any man, and I don't want to go to the devil's house for any man."

Moscato ordered that Giacomo Cenci be led in. Then followed the first really dramatic scene of the trial. The judge had till then circled about his victim, as a wolf about a startled lamb; now he made his spring and sunk his fangs deep.

First he asked, for the second time, through whom the witness had received the first hint that a crime had been committed, and the news of the investigation set on foot at La Petrella by Querco and Tirone, with the information

they had obtained. The judge seemed to show interest in all that Giacomo told him of the letter on this subject that had come from his castellan at Assergi; he was interested also in the dialogue Giacomo had had with Cesare Cenci. "I said to Cesare: 'What the devil do I care what they choose to do? . . . I laugh at all this business, and in substance I have always laughed at it.' "

"At what?" asked Moscato.

"At the persecution by Signor Luzio Savelli and at the malignancy of the creditors." This answer is explained by the fact that Cesare had already told the judge that the trial was directed against him, his brother and sister, "and perhaps the whole house of Cenci."

Moscato then repeated his questions three times, using the same words, as if he had not understood the answers. Then he swooped on his prey with this question: Had he treated with any one about the death of his father? *An ipse constitutus unquam tractaverit cum aliqua persona super nece dicti eius patris.*

Giacomo stood a moment as if stunned. Then recovering himself: "I marvel that Your Worship should say such words to me! This is a fine question!" The judge, cold and motionless, repeated it. Giacomo replied, but less dramatically: "I have never treated about procuring the death of my father, nor have I had any thought of it . . . ; nor do I know that any other person has treated of killing my father or of causing him to be killed."

Why then had he bestirred himself to obtain the remission of Olimpio's old crime?

Giacomo, overwhelmed, was silent before answering. Then he accused Pomella of the action. He himself had yielded to Pomella's insistence; but he had given some slight aid also because Olimpio had tormented Bernardo, Paolo, and himself with his entreaties. However, he had not even seen the petition. After all, Olimpio had received his pardon "from the Cardinal legate," the Pope having been absent at the time. Giacomo himself had given no order to pay the fee of fifty scudi.

Hemmed in by questioning, he weakened. He admit-

ted that his brothers too had beset him to pay this sum, so that he had ordered Mario Fano to pay it! He would never have done it of his own accord, for he detested Olimpio. "I treated him with no courtesy, for I could not bear to see him, and I had no intimacy with him, and what kindnesses I did him were done because my brothers had been at La Petrella, and he was ever with my brothers. . . ." Yes, Olimpio had remained in the house to sleep, but that was when Paolo was sick to death. It was also true that "he used to eat with us and with the ladies"; but the ladies soon began to dine separately. "I am not keeping Olimpio's daughter," he repeated: "it is my sister keeps her."

Confused and shaken, he was remanded to prison. In attempting to defend himself, he had already begun to abandon Bernardo and Beatrice. He was to descend to still lower depths.

Naturally Giacomo's accusations of Orazio Pomella with respect to the latter's industry in obtaining the remission of Olimpio's condemnation for murdering the Marcel de' Corvi inn-keeper, led to the arrest of that enterprising tailor. He was arrested on Wednesday morning (January 20th) "at the door of Madonna del Pianto or a little further up." He was taken to the Corte Savella and examined two days later.

He began by confessing that he had been in prison; twice or thrice "in the time of Monsignor Ascanio. I was taken by the soldiers; I was publicly racked and set free. The second time I was arrested for throwing stones before the gate of the Light Horse Barracks; I was but a lad; I was sent to prison in Borgo. The third time I was taken by Gentile, who was a judge of the Vicar; I was taken in company with a woman."

He made no difficulties about declaring that he was a sort of factotum of the Cenci, that he frequented their house, aided them at need, and was familiar with their lawsuits and their business. "I have aided these gentlemen in buying and selling, in pawning and redeeming pledges from Hebrews."

He had gone with them to La Petrella to bring back the ladies; he had even taken an active part in the preparations and had found the money, since Giacomo was short of funds. He declared that he knew no other tale than that of the fall from the balcony; but Ulisse Moscato did not seem convinced.

The excellent Pomella then drew a far from alluring portrait of Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci. He described them as insensible even to the death of Cristoforo; we have recorded the incident. He made no secret of the fact that they had indicated a wish their father might die. He added on the other hand that the father had subjected his sons to genuine hardship; sometimes, even, he had permitted Bernardo and Paolo to go in rags like beggar-boys; a highly offensive course as may be imagined to one who was a tailor!

The examination was here interrupted, but later resumed before the Most Excellent Molella.

Orazio Pomella recounted the journey he had made in the suite of the Cenci to La Petrella. He told of his arrival there, what he had seen and done, with whom he had spoken, what he had heard: not only the tale of the fall from the balcony, but also that of the discovery of the "paper book" wherein Cristoforo Cenci, senior, had foretold that his son Francesco would die of a fall.

He spoke at length of Olimpio and of his own part in obtaining the remission of Olimpio's condemnation.

Beatrice was then removed from her home and brought before Moscato and Molella.

"How long will you persist in not telling the truth?"

"I can say naught else."

"Speak the truth, I tell you, *omissis mendaciis et subterfugiis.*" [1]

"I can say naught else than what I have said."

"Did you not give money to Marzio Floriano, called Catalano of Petrella?"

"I have not given money to any person, neither to Marzio, nor to any one else."

[1] Omitting lies and subterfuges.—*Trans.*

Did witness not give him twenty scudi and a certain cloak? Did she not restore to him his wife's gown?

"Signore, I tell you that I have not given to this Marzio, nor to any other person, money of any sort, nor yet the cloak, nor yet did I restore to him his wife's gown although this gown of his wife's was in the castle while my father, Signor Francesco, was alive. But I at any rate did not restore it to him, nor yet do I know what is meant by mention of this money and this cloak . . . ; I know naught of such things."

Let witness speak the truth and not oblige the tribunal to confront her with the witnesses.

"Let them but come and say this to my face!"

Moscato insisted in his questions; Beatrice answered consistently with scornful denial.

Marzio was haled from Tordinona, and brought to the stand, confronting her. He was quite demoralised, as though crushed by the weight of the dead man's cloak; she faced him, bold and unyielding.

Being questioned, he replied: "Signore, all I have deposed and confessed, I have confessed with all truth, and where I have named this Signora Beatrice, I have not named her wrongfully . . . but I have told the real and true truth, and as truth I am still ready to affirm it here before Signora Beatrice." He reaffirmed: "Signora Beatrice here present gave and granted me twenty scudi in paoli and testoni, and also this cloak of mixed cloth which I wear on my back, and she restored to me also my wife's gown." In short, he confirmed all he had said in his first examination, which was then read aloud, *alta et intelligibili voce ad intelligentiam amborum praesentium.*[1]

At this point a battle of assertion and denials began between Catalano and Beatrice. She repeated many times: "Marzio lies in his throat!"

Then Moscato, *ad omnem bonum finem et effectum*,[2] had Marzio brought *ad locum tormentorum et ibi spoliari,*

[1] In a loud and distinct voice, so as to be understood by those two present.—*Trans.*

[2] For good and sufficient reasons.—*Trans.*

ligari et funi applicari,[1] that he might declare whether he would reaffirm all he had said. He did so reaffirm; but for binding proof the judge had him stretched, and asked him if he had told the truth. "I confirm it now on this rack!" he groaned, while Beatrice repeated: "He lies in his throat!"

Marzio remained suspended *per spatium unius Credo;* [2] he was then lowered and released from the rack; "his arms having been resettled," he was remanded.

Beatrice thus subscribed her examination: "All that I have testified I, Beatrice Cenci, have testified as the truth." She was then reconducted to her palace.

Two days later (January 24th) Paino was again examined briefly, that he might tell who were Giacomo's servants and who the servants of Francesco Cenci at the time of the murder; he was asked also for their whereabouts at the moment. Of Francesco's servants he remembered Giorgio, Sartorio and Girolamo. Giorgio, "lives over toward La Minerva, and wears a blue suit and is old." He had been "in the house that morning when Signor Giacomo was arrested." Girolamo, after returning from La Petrella, had fallen ill, "and he went to the Hospital of San Spirito. He is a young man whose beard is now just coming. He goes clad in mourning clothes. In Signor Giacomo's house are the steward named Cesare and myself. Bernardino, who teaches Signor Giacomo's children, and another, Lazzaro, who is from Assergi, and Giacomo, a coachman, and Francesco, the stable boy." We shall soon have occasion to refer again to Lazzaro of Assergi and to Cesare. The latter was Cesare Bussone of Terni, who had entered Giacomo's service after Cristoforo's death.

The witness remembered Olimpio also; but Olimpio was no servant! "He used to eat and drink there in the house, at table with Signor Giacomo and his brothers."

[1] To the torture chamber, and there stripped, bound, and racked.—*Trans.*

[2] For the space of a Credo.—*Trans.*

On the same day Orazio Pomella was likewise re-examined at Corte Savella.

The judge inquired which horse Olimpio had used when he departed from Rome a few days before Paolo's death. The witness was not able to reply. He gave, however, other details about the departure, and in general about Olimpio; he described Olimpio's appearance and the life he led in Rome. He was again questioned about the strange conduct of the Cenci with regard to their dead father. Had they made any inquiries at La Petrella as to the persons who had put him on the bier, as to the funeral rites performed, as to the interment? Had they visited the tomb? Pomella repeated his damaging testimony: "They made no diligence in those inquiries, nor did they essay to make any, nor did they do any one at all of these things mentioned." He had heard, first from Lucrezia, then from Beatrice, then from "the priests of La Petrella," that Francesco had been buried in Santa Maria della Petrella. There had been no further talk of it.

On the following day, January 25th, in Tordinona prison, Bernardo Cenci was brought before Moscato and Giunta to testify, especially about his journey to La Petrella with Paolo, and about the brothers' escape. The examination then returned to Olimpio. The witness confessed that Olimpio had been at their house before and after Signor Francesco's death; he had obtained, thanks in part to the witness, his "remission." At the Corte Savella, two days later, Cesare Cenci also testified on the same subject.

On the same day, the 27th, Giorgio, son of Andrea Vandrè, Venetian, deceased, was examined in Moscato's quarters. Giorgio was the only servant who had been in the castle when Francesco Cenci was killed. He made a point of saying that he had served many princes. "But now, as I am old, I serve as agent of the Genoese Company." He continued that he had served Giacomo, after Francesco; later he had been "collector of alms" for the

Converts' Nunnery. He told of the two periods when he had been with Signor Francesco, then told what he had seen and heard on the terrible ninth of September, 1598.

He was asked how entrance and exit was afforded to the castle; he described the two doors and the way in which the keys were thrown to him. On the morning of Signor Francesco's death Beatrice had thrown the keys to Giorgio; he had opened the outer door and tossed them back to her; he had then gone to do the marketing. On returning he had found the inner door also open. He had heard no noise during the night, but Signor Francesco's rooms were at some distance from his sleeping-quarters.

Giorgio was not set at liberty when his examination was concluded. He was put in a "secret cell" of the Corte Savella prison.

On January 30th, our old acquaintance, Don Marzio Tommasini, arch-priest of La Petrella, was examined in Moscato's quarters, Giunta also being present. He made statements of considerable gravity, but prefaced them with the words: "As I am a mass-priest, and not to incur any irregularity, I do not purpose by this examination of mine to prejudice the life and blood of any person."

He too described how Cenci's body had been laboriously lifted from the wilderness, described the wounds and the ghoulish spectacle of Dorotea, thrusting in her finger. He affirmed: "In no wound did I find or see any iron or wooden object . . . nor yet thorn nor spike of elder, nor any other thing."

He denied that he had told the Cenci women the contrary; he had merely answered their questions by describing "said wounds," saying also "that he [Francesco] had a bruise above the left hand on the outside of the wrist."

The body had been cold when recovered. The fact had been told him by those who had had to touch it in removing it from the wilderness. Besides, he too had ascertained the fact by lifting up a hand while the body was being washed.

The witness repeated to Moscato other momentous observations which had already been made at La Petrella. How had Signor Francesco ever come to be strolling so early on the balcony, he who always arose much later? The ladies had told him that perhaps he had gone to urinate, or to make an inspection of the castle because of the "jealousy" and suspicion in which he always lived. The witness had seen the hole. "And I tell you surely that in no wise . . . could Signor Francesco's body pass there . . . a thin and slight body could barely have passed there, and Signor Francesco was fat." Also the injury done to the parapet was a small thing, "half a span long."

The arch-priest was dismissed, but after having given a pledge to appear the following day under forfeit of three hundred scudi.

January came to an end with an examination of Giacomo. He was confronted with two witnesses: first with Catalano, then with Cesare Cenci. The scene was still Tordinona; Moscato and Giunta were present.

From the moment he had sprung the sudden question upon Giacomo in regard to his treating for his father's death, Moscato's stern bearing did not change. His skill in reducing the witness to helplessness by a hail of unexpected questions was used without pity. At first, as if to reassure Giacomo, he had questioned him on secondary matters, receiving the answers as if they were quite satisfactory. Then he had begun to press his victim close, with a less reassuring mien, and finally had opened a direct attack. Now he asked whether, before the death of Francesco, Giacomo, in Rome, had given anything to Olimpio to carry to La Petrella. Nothing, came the answer; nothing either before or after; nor had the witness ever done any action to another's injury, "and particularly to the injury of his father."

Had he not given some poison to Olimpio (he referred to the reddish root) and also a vial full of opium? Had he not assured Olimpio that he would grant a dowry to his daughter and make provision for his family?

Giacomo replied that all this was false. The judge asked him what he would say if the accusation should be made to his face.

Giacomo's thoughts were busy. Who knew of it save Olimpio and Beatrice? Beatrice would not speak, and Olimpio was far away, and perhaps dead! (Giacomo did not yet know what had happened at Novellara.)

Marzio was now brought forward and both witnesses were sworn.

Marzio affirmed that Olimpio had shown him the reddish root, and had said not only that Signor Giacomo had given it to him, but that he had given it to him for the purpose "of poisoning Signor Francesco."

Giacomo denied repeatedly, and Marzio reaffirmed. Then the latter was led out, and Giacomo remained the target for the judge's questioning.

Why, immediately after Signor Francesco's death, had the witness's sister and stepmother permitted Olimpio, previously driven out of the castle, to return there and act as master?

"If Olimpio aided my women-folk and did their service after my father's death, what have I to do with it, think you? And if Olimpio's women-folk aided and lived with my women-folk at La Petrella, what have I to do with that? And if Olimpio came to meet us when we entered there . . . and if he accompanied us as far as Mentana . . . how do I know why he came? And if then Olimpio came to my house, how do I know why he came there? . . . And if he slept and gave aid along with the doctor present at my brother Paolo's illness, how do I know why he gave aid? . . . and if I received Olimpio who was a homicide and a condemned man, I did it because he was a servant of Signor Marzio Colonna. . . . As for Olimpio's daughter, it is true that she came with us to Rome, but I did not bring her, my women-folk brought her . . . and the order that I subscribed for those fifty scudi which were given to the Tailors' Company, I signed to please my brothers, as I have said."

Giacomo could no longer extricate himself from the

net of questions. He responded forever with his puerile "How do I know?", although, as the eldest surviving son of Francesco, he had become the head of the family at his father's death and was therefore authorised to put a stop to everything. He persisted in his assertion that no one had ever told him that the Royal Courts (of Naples) "nor any other court on earth" had contended that Signor Francesco had been murdered and that the guilt was ascribed to Olimpio. On the contrary every one knew and said that his father had fallen from the balcony. Not even when he was sheltering Olimpio in his own house had any one warned him of the suspicions of the Royal Court nor of the presence of a Royal Commissioner in La Petrella, conducting investigations. Even when informed that Cesare Cenci had testified to having informed him of the current rumours, he clung to his denials, till finally Cesare was summoned to confront him.

It was the first time that two members of the Cenci family found themselves on opposite sides in a question of fact; thenceforth neither one nor the other could shift his ground. Cesare was obliged to reaffirm that he had informed Giacomo of the news brought from La Petrella by the cowherd.

Giacomo replied that possibly Cesare had thought he had told Giacomo the news, but had not in fact done so. Cesare would not consent to that and repeated his affirmation. He was returned to his cell, while the other reiterated that Cesare was mistaken. Thus the examination concluded.

A diplomatic despatch of January 30th, gave the following information to the Court of Modena: "Signor Francesco Cenci's father was a churchman of much wealth, augmented later by his own niggardliness; so that he came to have an income of 30,000 scudi and was the lord of many castles, though a natural son. Now this unhappy son [Francesco], as he led a most unheard-of life such as has never been described even in the chronicles of misers, so did he also die. But first he saw the bad end of his two sons who were slain; and now we hear that the third

one has confessed that he lent a hand in killing his father. And this being true, naught else need be looked for than to see the severest punishment meted upon him."

But it was not true that Giacomo had at that time already confessed.

CHAPTER XVIII

CATALANO'S REVELATIONS

The first occurrence in February was Giacomo's removal from the Tordinona prison to the Castel Sant' Angelo.[1] When this was known in the city it created a deep impression. The rumour grew that Giacomo had confessed; and although Beatrice had not yet been taken to prison, common talk dealt hardly with her name. "Meanwhile their kin have for this purpose commanded in Araceli the special forty hours of prayer to the Lord God, our best refuge."

But if the belief that the Cenci had had their father butchered gained ground, so likewise did the opinion that they were not guilty, but that their incarceration and trial had been contrived "for no other end than to lay hands on their money."

More will be said on this subject; but it is as well to record here that the two rumours were born together, and at the very inception of the trial.

The two first days of the month were devoted to the examination, in Moscato's quarters and in the presence of Giunta, of the arch-priest, Don Marzio Tommasini (for the second time), and of the canonical priests of La Petrella, Don Francesco Scossa and Don Salvati.

"In my opinion," said Don Marzio, "it is not likely

[1] In the *avviso* of Feb. 6 it is stated that both Giacomo and Bernardo were removed "on Monday morning" [Feb. 1] from Tordinona to the Castello. But as a matter of fact Bernardo remained in Tordinona until August. Matteo Setti fell into other errors in his letter of February 4 to G. B. Laderchi, Secretary of the Duke of Modena. He said: "On Sunday morning (Jan. 31) the two sons of the late Francesco Cenci were sent to prison in the Castello, as the Court had received evidence that these sons had cut their father's throat. When this has been verified they will receive condign punishment." As we know, Giacomo and Bernardo had been under arrest since Jan. 14. And on Feb. 1 (not Jan. 31) Giacomo alone was transferred from Tordinona to the Castel Sant' Angelo.

that Signor Francesco, in falling . . . through that hole, could have thrust forward and opened a gap in the parapet; for in that case, seeing his feet give way beneath him, he would have sought to draw in the parapet toward himself, to where he was falling, to save himself from falling. And it does not appear to me reasonable, if his feet were losing hold and dropping through the floor, that he could have so thrust forward the parapet. And therefore the rumour has arisen in La Petrella that the gap was expressly contrived by Signor Francesco's ladies to give colour to the tale of his fall, and that for this purpose the hole was likewise made." Gradually the deed had been reconstructed as in substance it had occurred. The actual execution of the crime was laid to Olimpio and Catalano; their complicity appeared evident, said the arch-priest, when both fled before Querco and Tirone. The witness then described at length Tirone's arrival and his researches, the momentous discoveries he had made and the conclusions he had reached. The witness was released, on his oath to keep silence.

Scossa repeated in a general way what the arch-priest had said. When he had heard the women's screams, he had sought to run to aid, despite his seventy years. But he had climbed the castle hill only by considerable effort. To be sure, he had been accustomed to go there to say mass, but under less strenuous conditions. He spoke of the balcony, of the wilderness, of the difficulty of transporting the body, which was already cold, of the wounds, of Tirone's investigations. He then recalled Lucrezia's words as she put in his hands twenty and a half giulii: "Do you bear in remembrance the soul of Signor Francesco, for here no one thinks of him more; and say naught of this to any man."

It was affirmed at La Petrella that Cenci was killed "by order and with the participation of the ladies . . . who were driven nearly desperate because Signor Francesco held them so fast and straitly in the castle; and Olimpio and Marzio had got money and goods for their work." He referred to the famous cloak.

The testimony of the young priest, Domenico Salvati, was in accord with that of his colleagues. He had run up with the others to the castle, and there had found Messer Attilio Ferretti, who wrote the letter, signed by Beatrice, by which the Cenci brothers were informed of their father's death. He found there also Olimpio's wife, with her mother, and "many other women of La Petrella." He too had seen Cenci's wounds, and had been a witness to Dorotea's horrible action in thrusting her finger into one of them.

"Olimpio," he pursued, "was the one who prayed that the burial be speedy, and he took the cloths which were on the bier and carried them off." Every one at La Petrella accused him, and with him Marzio Catalano, who incidentally had Signor Francesco's cloak. Tirone by his discoveries—the hatchet, the mattress, the walled-up window, etc.—had defined the general lines of the crime precisely as the intuition of public opinion had previously pictured them. Concerning the hole in the balcony there could be no two opinions. Hardly more than a span wide, how could the corpulent Signor Francesco have passed through it? Olimpio had installed himself in the castle as master, "and let only whom he pleased enter . . . and gave all orders." As for the Cenci family, they had not even taken the trouble to see the church where their father was buried; "a thing which set all the folk murmuring and marvelling."

Don Salvati also was set free on his oath to keep silence.

Moscato wished the arch-priest to throw more light on the time that passed between the women's screaming and the raising of the body from the wilderness. It was clearly his intention to settle whether sufficient time had passed for the body to have become so cold. The arch-priest was also interrogated with regard to the various conversations he had had with the ladies; he was especially asked whether he might not have told them that there was some bit of elder in the wounds.

He denied this emphatically. He ended by confirming what Don Salvati had told of the shameful manner in

which Olimpio had "hurried Signor Francesco's corpse into its tomb."

The following day, February 3d, was the date of the longest and most important examination of the trial: that in which Marzio Catalano confessed and described the crime.

The scene is in the cells of Tordinona and in the chill court-room. Marzio is brought before Moscato and Pompeo Molella. He still wears the dead man's cloak; the clerk never failed to note this, as if it lay as heavy upon the assassin's back as upon his conscience.

Moscato counselled him to confess everything; Catalano replied that he had done so.

But, insisted the judge, the Court knows that he is *complicem sicarium et partecipem praedicti homicidii*,[1] that he received twenty scudi *pro dicto homicidio et pallium quod defert*.[2] He himself said to the *sbirri* who arrested him at Poggio Vittiano that Olimpio had killed Francesco. Let him confess once for all that he had a share in the crime or let him prepare to be tortured.

Marzio repeated that he had told the *sbirri* that Olimpio had been the slayer, not himself; he had not been present at the crime; it was for no such reason that he had received the twenty scudi. "And this cloak which I bear on my back," he continued, "was given me as a mere gift, and for remembrance of Signor Francesco."

Moscato then reminded him that at the moment of his arrest he had exclaimed: "Here I am; if I have done any wrong, it is but due that I bear the penalty. Can I do more than die? One must die some day." But Catalano denied that he had said these or similar words; when threatened with a confrontation with the witnesses concerned, he replied that they would lie. First the constable Pirro Galeotto, then Francesco Vico, both court-sheriffs, were brought in; Marzio declared their statements false.

[1] An accomplice in the murder and a participant in the said homicide.—*Trans.*

[2] And the cloak he was wearing, for said homicide.—*Trans.*

Let him take heed; his own relatives as well accuse him. No, he repeats, he took no share in the murder of Signor Francesco.

Then "the court ruled that he should be constrained to say the truth, with torture," in view of his pertinacious denial and the gravity of the crime committed on the person of a Most Noble Roman, and in consideration of the weight of evidence against him, Marzio, and considering that the crime was committed *in loco secreto et remoto, clausis hostiis et noctis tempore.*[1]

Catalano was to tell the truth at last. Indeed the researches of Querco and Tirone, common rumour, and the depositions already obtained had put the Court on its track. The court in this case demanded of the accused that he should tell what in substance corresponded to the actual facts. But if the Court had been working on a false supposition, it would have obtained by torture only those falsities from the sufferer which the judge would ask of him. For torture has never served any other purpose—saving when a few sublime and heroic souls rose superior to it—than to make the victim say what the examiner wished to have him tell.

Marzio was led to the place of torture. Not until the poor wretch had been stripped did he turn to supplicate Molella, saying: "Signor Fiscale, a word to Your Worship!" He withdrew with the Fiscale and said to him: "I will tell you the truth; do not put me to the rack!" He was unbound and brought back to the witness-stand.

He began: "Signore, the facts of the death of Signor Francesco Cenci went in this manner. Signora Beatrice . . . had a great desire to get her father . . . slain, and she said that in no wise would she live longer such a straitly confined life; and therefore she began to treat with Olimpio Calvetti that he should kill or procure the death of her father."

He then told how Beatrice had had recourse to him as well, with a thousand fair words, begging him to persuade

[1] In a secret and remote place, behind closed doors and by night.—*Trans.*

the bandits of Marcetelli to seize her father; this was when her brothers, Bernardo and Paolo, were still at La Petrella, whence they fled with Olimpio's aid. However, Catalano made haste to add, "I began to say that I would treat with those bandits . . . but in fact I did nothing at all!" Then Beatrice, weary of delay, conceived a different method, and spoke to him of it. She wished him to go to Rome; but in the end it was Olimpio who made the journey. When Olimpio returned to La Petrella, he showed the deponent the red root and said that he had also a vial of opium . . . and that both had been given him by Giacomo Cenci for the poisoning of his father. Both were handed to Beatrice by Olimpio.

When Olimpio was expelled from the castle, he had unbricked the window above the wilderness before his departure. Through this window, and by the help of ladders to surmount a wall, he was able, not merely to enter the castle, but to come to Beatrice's side. Marzio described the precise route. He then dealt with the "desperation" of Olimpio and Beatrice because the poisoning project was frustrated by Francesco Cenci's suspicions, which obliged some one to taste his food and drink before he would touch them.

Two of their plans had now come to nothing! It was therefore decided to assassinate him by main force. On Sunday evening, September 6th, they came to Beatrice's quarters, with the help of the ladders and in the manner we know, which Marzio described minutely. It was there that he learned that Signor Francesco was to be assassinated and his body cast from the balcony, with the simulation of a fall. We shall not follow him through all the details of his testimony, which occupies nearly two hundred pages in the Brazzà manuscript.[1] The facts are all known to us; he related them truthfully, merely saying that he "did not give Signor Francesco more than two blows on the shins with the rolling-pin." He described the various postponements of the crime; he repeated the words exchanged with Olimpio, and the promises made to him,

[1] Ninety-five sheets, equivalent to 190 pages.

the deponent, by Beatrice; he spoke of the nights he had passed in Santi de Pompa's rooms, while Olimpio was in the apartment of Beatrice; he told of Plautilla's ascent of the hill to spy into the castle; of the culprits' return to their homes; and finally he described the crime and all the appalling incidents that followed. He confessed everything; truthfully, we have just said, for his confessions correspond fully with all that was told before and after by other witnesses who had no contact with him of any sort, and who had no motive to falsify the truth (for example, the priests of La Petrella). His confession is in complete agreement with all that Querco and Carlo Tirone had discovered in their convincing researches at La Petrella. It corresponds with what Porzia and Plautilla confessed, with such woful self-abandonment; it corresponds no less with Olimpio's own revelations to his brother, Pietro, and to Camillo Rosati.

All the episodes of the horrible tragedy are so logically and closely bound together, they develop along such a continuous, evident, one might almost say natural line, that wherever a lie or inexactitude appears it is as quickly perceived as a discord in a symphony.

Moscato passed February 4th in tabulating the results of the examination, and his impressions; he was busied also in settling further points on which Marzio should be re-examined. The following day he had Marzio brought before the tribunal, still in Tordinona. Moscato was present, and, in place of Molella, the Substitute Fiscale Boezio Giunta. Marzio, according to custom, was asked if he confirmed what he had deposed in the previous examination. He replied: "So it stands in my soul's conscience, and pray God may pardon me!" He sought to extenuate his own guilt by adding that he had pleaded with Signora Beatrice and Olimpio, that the crime should not be committed. He showed emotion as he thought of his baby daughters. "I pray God that He take compassion on me and pardon me, and so also I pray Your Worships that you take some pity on me, because I have two girl babies, who have naught left but the grace of God, and

they have no one left save only me, and if I die they will go to the brothel." He began to groan and weep and repeat: "Have pity on me!"

Marzio said that Olimpio perhaps would have done the deed alone, but that, having admitted Marzio to knowledge of the preparations, he wished, by making him an accomplice in the crime, to insure his silence. We, on the other hand, know that this idea was conceived by the Cenci women.

Finally Marzio described how he and Olimpio dressed the body, and what they and the ladies had done immediately after the murder. He then told of his journey to Rome and the promises made him by Beatrice.

After these confessions, Lucrezia and Beatrice moved at a more rapid pace toward their fate. On February 6th, or at the latest on the morning of February 7th, they were arrested and confined in the prisons of Castel Sant' Angelo.[1]

Here Lucrezia was questioned on the 7th; she responded with a puerile simulation of ignorance of the simplest matters; she floundered in many contraditions. She insisted on the fall from the balcony. Of all who had come to see it "none was so bold as to venture on it, for it was shaky and they feared to fall down it."

She did not know how many mattresses there were in the castle; she did not know who had got the mattresses from the bed she shared with Francesco. "I did not take these concerns upon myself." She said first that after the death of her husband she had slept in Beatrice's room on those mattresses. Then, evidently fearing she had disclosed a compromising fact, she added rapidly that in truth she did not remember well, for she did not know who had torn up the marriage bed. "I swooned straightway when I heard that Francesco was dead, and they laid me on the bed."

[1] Not on the 13th, as is asserted by Bertolotti (p. 280), Spezi (p. 164), and Rinieri (p. 220), and not in Tordinona, as Rinieri says. It is true that an *avviso* of the 13th states: "They have been transferred from their house, which had served as their prison, etc."; but it does not definitely say that it had happened that day.

"Did you see blood on it?"

"Why should there be any blood?" The door of the bedchamber where she slept with her husband, had no key nor bolt of any sort, but was merely closed with a latch. When Francesco had been put to bed, Beatrice "would pull the door to" as she departed.

Plautilla and her sister, Artemisia, had indeed slept in the castle after the occurrence; but the witness did not know if Olimpio slept there also. She did not recall whether he had eaten with herself and Beatrice. "It may be so . . . but I did not see him there!" He had also done "some errands" for them; but "I left everything to Signora Beatrice and did not meddle therein." She did not know of any ill feeling between her husband and Olimpio; she did not know why the latter had been expelled from the castle. Perhaps Francesco, being obliged to go to Rome, wished the women to remain alone. Besides, when her husband was dead, the reason she had not sent away any of those who assembled there was that the castle did not belong to her!

In short, she made nothing but fatuous statements, and repeated them to weariness, without distinguishing between what she would have done well to deny and what she could admit and relate without prejudice—or even to her advantage.

On February 9th, she was again interrogated in the morning and afternoon, still in the Castel Sant' Angelo. In the morning only Moscato was present; in the afternoon, Molella and Giunta as well.

Had she ever seen her husband bid Beatrice try the food and drink before eating and drinking himself?

"I did not notice if Francesco made any one give the food credit, nor if he required a sampling of what was given him to eat and drink; for although I ate and drank at his table, I did not observe if he was having Beatrice give credit to the food and drink, but I never gave it credit for him." Then she added: "It may be that Francesco gave me to eat of what he himself ate, but I never realised any such slyness, or that he was doing it for that

reason." She repeated: "I did not give heed to those things."

It was folly to hope that the Court would be satisfied with such answers, but Lucrezia's brain found nothing better. Thus, when they asked her why Francesco Cenci had his food prepared outside the house, rather than trust to herself, his sons and his own servants, she had not wit enough to remark that he distrusted them unjustly, but exclaimed: "He must have liked the food!"

She returned to the matter of the mattresses and the sheets. She had not seen them, nor given them to be washed. Her talk wandered on and on: "Artemisia used to wash our dirty linen for us, both the bed-linen and tablecloths and towels, and shirts and other things. Signor Francesco would give them [to her] in our presence," and she would bring them back "fine and white." All this had nothing to do with the question. The judge went on to ask her who had received the linen, the sheets, and the towels which were on the bier. Lucrezia replied that the arch-priest had kept them all, as he himself had told her. She did not know exactly what linen was in question; she did not know whether or not it had been washed; if it had been washed, she did not know by whose order. She did not know if any one had entered the castle, Olimpio or any one else, "young or old"; she had seen no one. She knew nothing about anything. She had not spoken with the servants; no one had told her anything. So this most wearisome of women went on repeating *ad infinitum* the same series of inanities.

In the afternoon she was asked why, if the marriage bed remained intact after Signor Francesco's death, she had not slept there, but had gone instead to sleep with Beatrice in the latter's room.

"In order not to sleep alone."

Why had she not rather taken Beatrice into her own bed?

"I did not think of it . . . and I went there to her room."

She opposed a denial to every precise statement of the

judge, without comprehending whether or not the denial would aid her. "I do not know that Olimpio and Marzio were in the castle, whether for good or evil; I knew nothing of it."

"The Court knows well that you took part in the proposal to kill Francesco, and that you had a share in the crime. No more lies! Answer all the questions put to you, according to the truth!"

Then the Court repeated to her the facts of the murder as they had occurred. But Lucrezia persisted in her negations. She knew only that Bernardo and Paolo had been at La Petrella and had then gone away. She did not know why, when, nor with whose aid. They had departed—that was all. Their father had mounted a horse "to overtake them," but later had returned.

It may well be that Beatrice, knowing her stepmother's small intelligence, had counselled her to deny forever, and at all costs. But the game was not without its dangers.

Meanwhile it had grown dark, and the examination was brought to an end.

Although these proceedings were secret, although the witnesses were always released under a bond of silence, something was bound to leak out, mingling naturally with fancies and conjectures which by force of repetition gained the authority of fact.

We have already seen how an *avviso* of January 30th to the Court of Modena stated that the rumour was rife that Giacomo had "confessed that he had lent a hand in the killing of his father." Now an *avviso* of February 10th to the Court of Urbino states that Lucrezia and Beatrice have already confessed and that Giacomo is preparing to do the same. It was not true; yet other facts recorded came close to the truth: such, for example, as the statement that the Cenci had "given 20 scudi to a countryman of the place [Marzio] who murdered Francesco; they gave him likewise a garment [the famous cloak]."

On the 10th, 11th and 12th of February Beatrice was thrice examined in the Castel Sant' Angelo, in the presence of Molella. Unfortunately for her, she had the evil

inspiration to adopt a contemptuous and sometimes insolent tone toward her judges.

The first examination began with the question whether she had given Olimpio money or other things. Beatrice replied: "I do not do courtesies to such folk."

Then she professed ignorance whether Olimpio had a sentence for crime remitted, and whether he slept in the Cenci palace. "I kept to my own room." Most assuredly she had never eaten with him, nor had she seen her brothers eat with him, nor had she heard of such an action.

To the question whether she had spoken to Olimpio on the day of her father's death she flung back: "I have told Your Honour in my testimony. Your Honour may read it there."

Had Olimpio come to Rome before Signor Francesco's death?

"I know nothing of it; go and ask him!"

Let her take care; the Court is well informed!

"If it is proven to the Court, it is not proven to me."

Had she seen the balcony? Was there more than one hole?

"I did not see if there was more than one hole . . . for I was not on guard, that I should do sentinel's work."

Had she leaned out over the balcony sometimes, before the event?

"I have gone through all the castle . . . when I had any need, I went there too."

In her second examination her attitude grew worse.

"At what hour would your father rise from bed?"

"I do not know. Go and ask him!"

Her cynical allusion to her dead father outraged Moscato and Molella.

"Be careful how you speak," said the first.

"I know not how better to make my answers. I did not pay attention to all these things. I did not know that I should have to report upon them to Your Honour. If I had known that, I should have paid more attention to them."

She gave negative answers to a long series of questions.

"I can say nothing but what I have said"; "I have said what I have said"; "I have told what I know," etc.

She gave only the information that her father had the gout, that her brothers, Bernardo and Paolo, had been at La Petrella and had later departed, pursued for some distance by their father. She did not know when they left, and was very far from inciting them to leave. And if "the contrary is proven to the Court, then falsity is proven."

Nor did she know if any other person had incited them to depart. "Had I known of that, I should have resented it and sought some vengeance."

"Did you conspire with Olimpio against your father?"

"That is not true, and will never be found true!"

She was asked whether there was a hammer and a rolling-pin in their house. She replied that she knew nothing about the first, not being a blacksmith; as for the rolling-pin, there was one, assuredly, since "there must be rolling-pins in every kitchen."

The judge said that she knew quite well that there was a hammer also.

"I have never seen a hammer in the castle, nor yet have I seen one in any one's hand, nor beside any person, nor do I know for what one would want such a thing . . . and I am not swearing falsely in any fashion."

This question, like others, was put to her three times, with ominous threats; she was warned that a witness would be called who would confirm everything to her face.

"To any who may tell me that, I will say that he lies in his throat."

She had not seen Olimpio from the day when he was expelled from the castle till after her father's death. The judge said that the Court had information to the contrary.

"What care I what information the Court has?"

As for the bandits, she had never heard that there were any, "either at La Petrella or in other villages and castles." She had never even heard of the village of Marcetelli! The judge might well perceive how fantastic was

the suspicion that she would make a pact with bandits of the place against her father! "And I marvel that Your Honour should ask me such a thing!"

The judge questioned her as to the sampling or "crediting" which her father imposed on her to assure himself that his food was not poisoned.

"I know not what you mean by this 'crediting.' I am no banker's clerk that I should do 'crediting'!" [1]

In the third interrogatory the judge gradually discarded mere allusions; he put point-blank questions. Finally he set Catalano on the stand against Beatrice. Thus this third examination, which opened more quietly than the two preceding, ended more dramatically.

Beatrice described at length, almost calmly, the three years she had passed at La Petrella, her life there and that of Lucrezia, the daily tasks of Olimpio and Santi de Pompa. But when Moscato asked her why she had admitted Calvetti to the castle immediately after the event, she burst out again: "What! Your Honour would have me take upon myself to drive him out . . . when he was master and castellan and had his possessions there in the castle? I did not wish to meddle in the matter."

If any man says that she spoke or dealt with any one in Santi de Pompa's abandoned rooms, "he is a great rascal"; and "if the Court is informed of the contrary, it is informed of falsity"; like "all the information against her."

"I have never spoken from the castle battlements with any man outside the castle." She had never leaned out "except when Signor Francesco was present." In that case, if "some woman was passing by, he would have me call her, either to see her or for some other idea of his; and also at times he would stand there on the castle piazza, and I would lean out and speak to those passing by according to his desire."

She had not seen Plautilla in the days just preceding her father's death. Yes, there was a Castle Vineyard;

[1] Her pun is no better in Italian: *Io non so' falegname che faccia le credenze;* "I am no joiner that I should make credences (small cupboards)."—*Trans.*

but she had not seen Plautilla "in any place." Likewise she had not seen that Olimpio had entered the castle, neither alone "nor with Marzio, neither by window nor wall, neither by ladders, ropes, nor other instruments, neither by day nor night." How could he enter?

Moscato remarked that Olimpio and Marzio were not mountains; they were not immovable; they could come to the castle.

"Whether they were mountains or not, I did not see them there."

What had she put in her father's glass or wine-bottle?

"God preserve me from doing such things; I never gave him anything which would be to his hurt."

Had no one furnished her with poisons?

"I made use of nothing but the wine-bottle."

"Think again!"

"There is no need to think again; I have thought of it all well enough . . . I am not a druggist. . . . Why does Your Honour ask me these questions? What makes you think I have done these things? Was I mad that I should betray my father? . . . I marvel greatly that Your Honour should ask me if I mixed opium or other like things in my father's food and drink and gave it to him. . . . I do not marvel at the man who tells the tale, he is a scoundrel; but I marvel at Your Honour who puts me these questions."

Moscato then proved to Beatrice that he knew the facts she was hiding. He described, one by one, the successive steps of the crime.

"Whoever told you these things is a lying miscreant; I marvel that Your Honour believes him. . . . I am no Turk and no dog that I should wish to shed my own blood."

The judge returned that Olimpio and Marzio had hesitated to commit the crime; then she had fallen into a rage, had begun to abuse them and to accuse Olimpio of having brought on a coughing fit, *artificiosa et ficta et non vera et naturalis*,[1] at the very moment when he was

[1] Artificial and feigned, and neither true nor natural.—*Trans.*

to do the deed. It was the Court's opinion that she had passed several months "in the strong resolve" to take her father's life.

"I know not what coughing fit you speak of."

When the judge persisted that she had seen Olimpio and Marzio enter her father's bedroom, hammer and rolling-pin in hand, she lost patience: "Has Your Honour yet finished?" She repeated that her father had fallen from the balcony; for if any one else had thrown him over, he would have cried out; "for he had a voice" to shout with, and she had ears to hear with. She had heard nothing. And yet, "Where was I? Was I not in the same house?"

Not a word of hers was allowed to pass uncontested. She had taken part in the crime; the proofs were to hand.

"I know not what Your Honour is talking of. . . . As to those folk of La Petrella who have been examined, according to Your Honour, they are rascals."

What would she say if Marzio should confirm everything to her face without flinching?

"I will tell him that he is a great liar and a great assassin."

Marzio, who had been ferried across the Tiber from Tordinona to Castel Sant' Angelo, was brought to face her. He was a picture of the profoundest misery, beneath the burden of his cloak which could not fail to awaken in Beatrice the vision of her murdered father.

The wretched man reaffirmed all that he had said in his last examination. "It was the truth! . . . and now I confirm it anew and ratify and maintain it here before Signora Beatrice here present. Would to God that I had never known her!"

"I say that he lies like a villainous assassin, and I will prove it to you."

But Marzio replied dolefully: "I have done no other villainy nor assassination save only the one which Signora Beatrice made me do, so may God forgive me!"

He was taken to the torture-chamber, stripped, and bound to the cord. He reaffirmed all his words. None

the less he was stretched; he mingled with his groans the words: "It is true! It is true!" Meanwhile Beatrice persisted: "I say it is not true!"

"Sir, yes, it is true; would it had never been so! . . . Oh, my luckless babes, oh, who will fend for you, who will win your bread?"

The order was given for him *leviter deponi, solvi, disligari et brachia reaptari et ad eius locum reponi*,[1] after having been suspended *per spatium unius miserere*.[2]

Moscato turned to Beatrice, throwing in her face Marzio's deposition.

"What matters it to me if Marzio says this? I say it is not true, and that he lies in his throat."

It was late; the shadows were gathering in the hall. The court record was therefore presented to Beatrice; she subscribed it: "I, Beatrice Cenci, affirm all I have said to be the truth."

On the same day (Feb. 12) Cesare Cenci was set at liberty. An *avviso* to the Court of Urbino said: "Everything has been got out of him, including things that would not otherwise have been confessed, for the girl and the others are most steadfast and only the peasant [Marzio] says and unsays things in his own guise, wherefore they are keeping him tormented." It was indicated, besides, that the persistence in examining him might be traced to Luzio Savelli on account of the disputes which we have recorded!

On February 13th Marzio and Lucrezia were confronted, still in the Castel Sant' Angelo and in the presence of Molella. Lucrezia related her husband's journeys to Rome and to La Petrella, and fell again into a morass of contradictions: "Look at what I said before . . . I have said what I have said . . . ; I refer to what I said before, I have said it so many times!"

[1] To be let down slowly, released, unbound, to have his arms resettled, and to be reconsigned to his quarters.—*Trans.*

[2] For the space of a miserere.—*Trans.*

But in substance she had said nothing, since she had seen nothing, heard nothing, remembered and known nothing!

Catalano repeated what he had already deposed. Lucrezia had spoken to him in Santi de Pompa's rooms, while he was in hiding there; Lucrezia had opened the chamber door on the morning of the crime to admit himself and Olimpio. . . . "And would it were not true, as it is; and it is all true, so may God pardon me; and would to God it were not true; I would gladly have a hand and foot cut off, so it were not true."

Lucrezia likewise accused Catalano of lying, but without Beatrice's boldness and violence. Her spirit was as lacking in tone as her small fat body.

The miserable Marzio was hung for the third time on the rack, like a limp rag, *ad tollendam omnem maculam et infamiam si qua adesset dicti adducti et ad magis validandum eius dictum.*[1]

He was stretched, and cried from aloft: "Oh, sir, yes, it is all true what I have said; it is true, true, sir, yes, yes; sir, it is true; Jesu!"

Lucrezia still maintained her denials. After a miserere was said, the sufferer was lowered, his arms reset: with his bones and muscles still quivering from the agony he had endured, he was returned by boat to Tordinona. Lucrezia re-entered her cell.

When the news of Catalano's torture and of Beatrice's attitude was noised about Rome, an *avviso* gave this report to the Court of Modena: "That ruffian who has accused Cenci of guilt in the murder of his father, persisted twice under torture; but the young daughter of the deceased, who is seventeen years old and very beautiful, is so steadfast in her word that her innocence is acknowledged."[2]

[1] For the removal of any spot or infamy, if such should still cling in the words he had proffered, and for the better validation of his words.—*Trans.*

[2] Catalano was tortured three times, not twice.

Porzia, daughter of Eusebio Calvi and wife of Catalano, was examined for the first time in Moscato's house, on Monday the 15th.

She had seen Signor Francesco's body "lying below the castle above the castle pool; and it was being washed clean of its blood by certain women; and I turned my eyes away to another side so not to see it, for it frightened me." She then told how, on the morning of September 9, 1598, at La Petrella, Marzio had been called by Olimpio before day, and had gone out with him. Marzio had returned late that day, saying that he had gone to Vallecùpola. She told of the rumours she had heard, of her conversations with her husband, of his flight to Ascrea and hers to Poggio Vittiano; she told of Querco's and Tirone's visits to La Petrella. She murmured abjectly that in La Petrella "it was held a certain thing that Olimpio was the one who had done the murder, together with my husband." She rehearsed her meeting with Olimpio near Poggio Vittiano, her conversation with him, and other facts already known to us. All that she said was true.

But a large part of Giacomo's testimony at the Castel Sant' Angelo on the following day was false. To be sure, he declared: "I have always told the truth and shall always tell it." The phrase was used in connection with his customary negatives to the questions on the plots against his father, on the poison, on the remission of Olimpio's penalty, on the flight of Bernardo and Paolo from La Petrella.

Still convinced that matters would be smoothed over, he busied himself in shielding Beatrice's honour and preserving her moral status, with reference to the "misfortune" which had befallen her. He still corresponded, from the Castel Sant' Angelo, with the Abbot Caetano, seeking to arrange a marriage between Beatrice and the latter's nephew. Letters were smuggled out of the prison by the agency of Giuseppe, cook of the vice-castellan (Amerigo Capponi, the celebrated rescuer of so many unfortunates during the recent inundations).

On February 20th Bernardo was removed from his solitary cell in the middle tower of Corte Savella,[1] and immediately subjected to a third examination. He was first questioned about the Cenci's property and about the agreement made with the creditors in San Giacomo degl' Incurabili; then about Olimpio's trip to Rome before Signor Francesco's death, and his two later visits to the Cenci palace.

"Our talk dealt with trifles, things of no moment."

"What? The talk dealt with trifles for a good three hours?"

"We talked of those pictures which are in the loggia." The witness then told of the meals Olimpio had taken at the time; the witness, however, had not joined him at table. He had merely drunk a draught and gossiped on general matters. . . .

"You discussed also many other subjects," suggested Moscato, "in such long colloquies! It is not to be comprehended how nobles such as you could treat with familiarity a man hated by your father, the assassin of a constable and an inn-keeper. How could you honour him so far as to touch this commoner's glass, to entrust to him Paolo in his illness, to take into your home a daughter of his, to procure his release from punishment for crime!"

The boy, thus hard pressed, stammered wretched excuses. He was not impudent like Beatrice, nor silly like his step-mother.

Up to this point the examinations had succeeded each other rapidly; there had been twenty-five in January and sixteen in February. Now they began to decrease in number; there were only ten between February 20th and the second half of April, or about two months. There then intervenes in the trial records a lacuna, after part of an examination of Beatrice on April 19th. The lacuna ends with the conclusion of an examination of Giacomo, of which the date is not known. It is however our opin-

[1] An *avviso* of the same day states: "I have heard that Cenci [Giacomo] has been removed to Torre di Nona and that they have racked him." Neither statement was true.

ion, even though this lacuna has deprived us of some interrogatories, that these were not many in number nor of special importance; otherwise there would be some trace of them in the Vatican *Summarium*. It is sufficient to recall that the prosecution of the trial was not resumed vigorously until May 28th, with the examination of Cesare Bussone, one of the slayers of Olimpio. From that time on, the trial was actively continued until the eve of the catastrophe.

On the last day of February old Giorgio was taken from his cell to Moscato's house. He cast some light upon the hour when Signor Francesco was accustomed to rise; on the exact time when Beatrice had called him, Giorgio; on Olimpio's expulsion from the castle, and his appearances there after that expulsion, and especially after Signor Francesco's death. He was able to add nothing of interest in regard to the holes in the balcony, the dead man's bed, and the "crediting" of the food by the women. But he stated that Olimpio lodged "continuously" with the Cenci in their palace at Rome, after the master's death. "And I have also seen him eating at their table morning and evening; and at the beginning it was while the women, that is Sigora Beatrice and Signor Giacomo's wife, were eating with Signor Giacomo, Bernardo, and Paolo. Olimpio also ate together with them, at the same table with those men and women."

After this, Giorgio was set at liberty.[1]

On March 2, in the presence of Moscato and Molella, Giacomo was again examined. He maintained his accustomed attitude of denial. Moscato asked, alluding to Olimpio, whether the witness knew that there was "a person in flight, who was suspected of the murder of Signor Francesco." No, Giacomo knew nothing of it. It availed the judge little thereafter to name Olimpio.

[1] In the Journal of the Victuals for the Cenci in their Imprisonment is recorded: "From Jan. 27, 1599, Giorgio . . . Venetian, thirty-two days rations at 15 soldi per day; total 4 scudi 8 soldi." As Giorgio had his second examination exactly 32 days after Jan. 27, or Feb. 28, it is evident that he was confined between his two examinations and was then released.

However, the examination gained in interest when Moscato began to speak of business matters. Giacomo replied: "My father handled his own affairs; it was he who leased property and collected rents. . . . I had only 100 scudi a month for my expenses and those of my family. These were given me by order of the Pope, the Rota, and the Auditor of the Camera. It was arranged that these allowances should be delivered to me by means of drafts free of restrictions or by other such means; I collected these supplies sometimes from Mario Fano and sometimes from other tenants of my father."

On other occasions in the course of this record we have referred to the administration of justice in Rome at the very time with which we are concerned. Let us now note Paruta's words with reference to the Auditor of the Camera and with reference to the Rota: "The Senator of Rome also judges in civil and criminal cases. He has three judges: two for civil cases, one for criminal; and appeals from their decisions go to the Senator himself; but the same matters may be brought to the Senator or to the Auditor of the Camera; and the choice between them is determined either by the plaintiff's first having had recourse to one rather than to the other, or by one rather than the other's having instituted the action."[1] As for the Tribunal of the Rota, Paruta calls it "very eminent," and "composed of twelve men, all doctors of law and of great estimation," who "assemble ordinarily twice a week, since there is always a mass of cases and matters to be expedited."

We return to Giacomo. He testified that at La Petrella he gathered together a number of business letters of his father. Here he made his first reference to the 13,000 scudi which he pretended were due to Marzio Colonna as a debt already contracted by the father; for that reason the assessment should be divided among the brothers.

The judge, his suspicion aroused, interrogated Giacomo at length. Giacomo testified that he did not know if

[1] *Opere*, II, p. 519.

Colonna had pressed his father to obtain the money; more, the deponent had not even known that his father had that debt, as he knew nothing of his father's other debts, except that they totalled approximately 80,000 scudi. All he knew was that after his father's death Colonna had made a claim for the money in a letter given him by Signora Giulia, wife of Colonna himself; and Rosati had once made the claim by word of mouth. Here Giacomo's own tale, a monument of impudence, is worth reproduction: "I have made a deed of that sum in favour of Signor Marzio by the instrumentality of Vola.[1] . . . It states that I assume and take upon myself a tax which Signor Marzio owned and was indebted of to a certain Martinez, a Spaniard; I do not remember his full name,[2] but I refer to the instrument drawn up by Mainardo or Panizza,[3] notaries of the Camera." He continued that this instrument, at the drafting of which neither Paolo nor Bernardo were present, "was made in the house of Signor Giulio Feo, advocate; it was in the month of December, if I remember well." Bernardo and Paolo had been informed of the debt; it was attested by a voucher left by Francesco, reading: "I, Francesco Cenci, declare by these presents that I am debtor to the Ill. Sig. Marzio Colonna to the sum of 13,000 scudi, which I have received, by order of the said illustrious Signore, from various agents of his." Giacomo added that this voucher had been shown to him by Signora Giulia eight or ten days before his instrument was drawn up. "When she shewed it to me . . . she bade me sit near to where she herself sat, and she spoke to me of this debt of my father's, and shewed me this voucher.

[1] It happens that the Capitoline notary, Melchior Vola, was exercising notarial functions at that precise time; but many of his instruments have gone astray, among which was the one referred to here; it was dated Dec. 4, 1598. See Francois: *Elenco dei notari*, pp. 78 and 105.

[2] His name was Francisco; he was a very well known banker in Rome. He was a native of Alcalá la Real in Andalusia. Very many notarial contracts in the course of the 16th century refer to him.

[3] Antonio Mainardo and Vincenzo Panizza. Acts of the first are found from 1591 to 1600; of the second, from 1592 to 1600.

And there was in the room an old woman, a matron whom the lady keeps in her home. But she was somewhat distant from me, for Your Honour knows that the rooms are large, and this woman was sitting apart as is customary." He had informed his brothers, he asserted, that prompt payment was incumbent on them, as the Signora "was demanding it urgently." Having no money available, he had acknowledged this debt to Colonna by the agency of the banker Martinez. Bernardo and Paolo were to have subscribed to this instrument; but the latter died during those very days. "The voucher was an in-folio, not subscribed to by any witness . . . as it seemed to me."

He had spoken with Giulia "in the evening or at night"; he did not know the hour. He had told the whole story to the brothers, he repeated, and had proved that it was necessary to pay. Bernardo and Paolo had said: "Do it, you!" [1] They had not seen the voucher, nor was it exhibited when Vola's instrument was drawn up. The matter was not discussed with Beatrice, who yet might well have learned of the debt "at home," for the fact was notorious. "All Rome knows of it." He did not remember whether the voucher was dated 1598 or 1597, nor where it was written. He stressed the fact that the instrument was drawn up at the insistence of Colonna and his wife. "Signora Giulia laid hands on the voucher, as soon as the instrument was made, in her own house, whither I went after it was drawn, but I do not remember how long after; and there was no one present." He had not suspected the authenticity of the voucher "because those people are gentlefolk and nobles, and I think that they would not have shown me one thing for another!"

He had never spoken of this matter to Olimpio; nor did he recall that Bernardo and Paolo had said anything in regard to the voucher. "I made no other effort to verify the statements contained in that voucher; but only saw it and read it as I have said, thus reposing on the

[1] Bernardo declared that he had had confidence in Giacomo.

good faith of Signor Marzio and Signora Giulia, avowing that their Lordships would not have told me aught but the very truth!"

Moscato interrupted that it could not be admissible that all this should have been unknown to the other members of his family who had lived with Signor Francesco. But Giacomo replied: "I cannot help whether it is believable or unbelievable, that these, my brothers and my sister and step-mother were no better informed than I about this voucher, though living with my father. . . . The instrument was executed in the house of Signor Giulio Feo,[1] and for witnesses were set down the names of the same Signor Giulio, and another whom I do not remember, but I refer to the instrument, and Camillo Rosati, the notary who drew the document; I do not recall that there were others."

"But," said the judge, "is it true that the witnesses and the notary were asked to breathe no word about this document?"

"I had no such understanding."

The instrument was taken by the court. It was dated December 4, 1598. It was translated by Girolamo Mazziotto, the same notary who recorded the examinations of the trial.

The voucher had been falsified by Giacomo (and naturally destroyed immediately after), merely to agree with the instrument which was drawn up with the concurrence of Marzio Colonna. Giacomo was to confess this fact at the Brotherhood of St. John the Beheaded a few hours before he went to the block.

When Giacomo's examination was finished, on the same day, March 2d, Beatrice was again questioned about the debt of 13,000 scudi and the instrument made in favour of Marzio Colonna. But she swore that she knew nothing of either.

The gravity of this matter has escaped every one up to the present, perhaps through ignorance of the original trial-records or through insufficient examination of the

[1] The family of Feo was a notable one in Rome.

confession made at the Brotherhood of St. John the Beheaded. It is not the case that Giacomo obtained this sum during his father's lifetime by pretending to Colonna that he was acting as his father's emissary.

This entire imbroglio was executed when Francesco Cenci was already lying in his squalid tomb at La Petrella! It is conceivable that Giacomo had contracted the debt with Colonna and could not pay it; and that he had then pretended, with Colonna's connivance, and by means of the false voucher, that an old debt of his father's was in question; which should therefore be proportioned equally on the inheritances of the other brothers.

In this case Colonna would have been counselling Giacomo Cenci to cheat the brothers with the sole purpose of facilitating the payment of the debt to himself. Our own suspicion is very different. We surmise that Giacomo did not immediately pay the money to Signor Marzio, but assumed a debt which Colonna himself bore toward the Spaniard, Francisco Martinez. To this obligation, Giacomo pledged also his own brothers, who were kept in ignorance or were falsely informed as to the true purpose of the transaction. Beatrice especially would have rebelled furiously, had she known it. The intrigue had its rise in the first dialogue between Giacomo and Rosati, Colonna's confidential man, concerning the removal from Rome of Olimpio and his suppression. It was none other than Rosati who had a chief part in this pretended contract, the very day before Marzio Colonna gave him the order to set forth for Lombardy, and to Olimpio the advice to accompany him.

Olimpio himself suspected the complicity of his master with Rosati in this faithless crime. And Olimpio knew better even than we that in his days, if there was a little of the gentleman in the brigand, there was a little of the brigand in the gentleman. Certainly Moscato understood the gravity of such coincidences. Notwithstanding the statements made to him by Giacomo in the examination of March 2, 1599, respecting the intervention of Camillo Rosati in this queer business, Moscato did not put the

slightest question in this regard. The fact is sufficient evidence that the judge knew who stood behind Rosati. It was Colonna, a personage who could not be touched.

Cesare Cenci, as we have seen, had just been released from prison. Although he had much to say about the resistance of Giacomo and Beatrice to Marzio's accusations, and about Marzio's hesitations and contradictions, he did not conceal the fact from himself that the trial was taking an ugly turn for the Cenci. He had recourse therefore to the Grand Duke: "That ancient service which our House preserves toward Your Serene Highness, bids us in all the accidents of our lives, to rely upon your favour and protection . . . to ourselves, who live ever ready on all occasions to spend our lives and all we have in the service of your House. Now as we are involved in certain persecutions, as Sig. Angelo del Bufalo will minutely relate to Your Serene Highness, and as I have already displayed my innocence of whatever was imputed to me, to the confusion of my enemies, as will no less appear in the case of Sig. Giacomo also and the other prisoners, I approach Your Highness begging you to be pleased to protect them as is just, that they may suffer no hurt at this time."

The Grand Duke took the fate of the Cenci to heart. He wrote to his ambassador in Rome and to Cardinal Delmonte that they should busy themselves in the Cenci's behalf. "By the help of Your Serene Highness and their own innocence," wrote Cesare again, on April 7th, "I am led to hope soon for the happiest result."

Events were at hand that would make short work of Cesare's misplaced confidence!

END OF VOLUME ONE

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